



MASKED KNIGHT

BOOK 02

Tiao Wu

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Masked Knight
by
Dancing

Synopsis

In a world where magic and sorcery flourish came a tale of a nobody who grew into a legend. Partake in the conquests and tribulations of a great army where warriors live day-to-day, seeking the thrill of combat.

Experience heart-rending drama and hilarious situations while awaiting the impending arrival of the malevolent evil stirring in the darkest depths of the world...

Journey alongside Rody, a young knight, as he dons a mask of circumstances that is filled with secrets to unravel the mysteries of the universe!

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 101: Assassin Attack

Rody's expression changed slightly. He looked at the servant and took a deep breath before asking, "Where is your master? Is he in that carriage?"

The servant solemnly and respectfully nodded.

Rody sighed and dismounted. He then followed the servant to the carriage. He calmed himself, gritted his teeth and then opened the door of the carriage.

A young woman was sitting on a soft fur in the spacious carriage. She was wearing a long, white silky dress. Her eyebrows were hazy like the distant mountains. Her eyes were cold as she looked at Rody and seemed to smile yet was not quite smiling.

Rody immediately felt relieved and smiled. "So, it is you! Miss Myka, you have given me a fright!"

Myka gave a shallow smile. Her tone was still cold but her voice sounded eager. She then slowly said, "Your Excellency the Duke have made great contributions in the Northwest Region. I am afraid you may have forgotten your promise."

Rody froze for a moment before he remembered his original promise to visit her. His face turned red and then he smiled. "I have only just returned a few days ago. I have been busy in the past few days and did not have the chance to visit you."

Myka laughed and said, "A few days ago, Your Excellency the Duke went to the brothel but you did not visit me."

Rody's face turned red and he whispered, "That day, there were other people around. Besides that, I also bumped into the people from the Great Moon Kingdom. As a result, it was not convenient for me to visit you."

Myka nodded and smiled, "Well, I do not blame you. However, you have returned for so many days, so I was worried about you

and decided to come and see you. I was afraid that you have now forgotten this friend.”

Rody sighed and smiled, “Of course, I will not forget you. I will never forget my friends.” Rody paused for a moment before continuing, “How are you these days?”

Myka looked a bit gloomy as she slowly said, “Bayan came to find me several times but all of his attempts were stopped. Ever since you left for the Northwest, he is becoming bolder every day.”

Rody frowned and asked, “Bayan? Does he...not know about your relationship with Seth?”

Myka smiled and replied, "Do not forget that, right now, you are Seth. However, he is becoming more uncontrolled since you were in the Northwest Region."

Rody frowned and did not say anything. After that, Myka smiled and said, “I came to meet you today, not to discuss this matter. Even though I live in the Imperial Capital, I do not have many friends. I knew that you had returned, so I decided to come and see you.”

Rody also smiled as he replied, “This is great. Anyway, I do not have any more business today. I remember that your wine is good. It is not easy to get to drink it. Today, I can go and savor it.”

Myka also smiled and replied, “Well, not only you did not act as promised when you came back, but you even try to take advantage of me.”

Myka smiled as she ordered her servant to drive the carriage to the brothel. A servant had also tied Rody’s horse to the carriage.

Along the way, the two of them talked and laughed. Rody felt relaxed. He was an impostor of the Duke and was tired of acting in the Imperial Capital. He could only relax when he was with Nicole at home. As a result, he also felt happy meeting Myka. That was because she also knew his true identity, and he felt relaxed as he

did not need to disguise his speech and manners.

When they arrived at the brothel, Madam Sophie saw that Myka and the Duke were together. She put up a smile but secretly felt scared. She felt that the Duke was someone who attracted problems. Even a few days ago, there was a fight in the brothel that scared off a lot of customers. She hoped that there would be no problems this time.

Rody also ignored her. He followed Myka into her room. Myka then took out the good wine, and both of them talked and laughed. They talked about the customs of the Northwest Region. Rody felt relaxed in front of Myka.

Although he talked about all things with Nicole, but, for some reason, he did not want to mention about his wonderful encounter with the Black Veil Saint. He wanted to hide his subtle feelings for Mouse from his lover.

However, it was different with Myka. When he first met Myka, he had been in a little bit of reverie. However, he had experienced a lot of things in the Northwest Region and that reverie had faded. The other party also knew his true self, and he felt close to her. As a result, he subconsciously told her everything.

When Myka heard that, she was shocked and turned pale. However, she was cold natured, unlike Nicole or Jojo who would turn pale and cry out in alarm.

Rody's face was red as he slowly recounted his experience with Mouse. Myka just smiled and listened quietly. When Rody told about their separation, he looked a bit gloomy. Myka's feelings were slightly stirred up when she saw Rody's appearance and said, "The Black Veil Saint was right. Your position is now different and you would need to prioritize the overall situation."

Rody gave a wry smile and said, "For a long time, I have not wanted to be the Duke anymore. I hope Nicole will be able to find Seth soon."

Myka looked a bit sad. She sighed but did not speak.

The two of them were silent for a while before Myka smiled and said, "I have recently learned a new song but I have not finished learning it. The next time you come here, I will sing it for you."

Rody smiled and replied, "Good! You dance well, therefore, your singing must be good as well."

Myka sighed and said, "I am just not sure when will be the next time you will see me." After that, she started to look lonely as she slowly continued, "I have no friends here. I hide inside my room every day. After Seth left, nobody visited me anymore. What a joke. In the Imperial Capital, I have no friends. The only one that can be considered as a friend is just you."

Rody raised his eyebrows and replied, "In life, one friend is enough! Miss Myka, no matter what, I am just an ordinary kid. I admire your conduct and your experiences in life. I have already considered you as my friend."

Myka smiled again as she raised her cup of wine and said, "Among the men whom I have met, you are the only person who calls me a friend. The others look at me as prey."

Rody drank another mouthful of wine and smiled. "Your words fill me with shame. When I first met you, I was also agitated for a long time."

Both of them felt happy as they did not have any estrangement in their hearts. They felt great comfort in having such a trusted friend in the Imperial Capital.

When the sun had set, Rody, who was feeling a little drunk, got up and asked to leave. Myka sent him out with a faint smile. She saw several of Rody's guards were already waiting outside the door.

Although Randt and a few of the guards were dismissed, they continued to follow Rody from afar. When Randt saw Rody enter

Myka's carriage and head towards the brothel, he gave a familiar laugh. He thought that the Young Master had not changed much, even though he was already a Duke.

They helped Rody get up on the horse. They noticed that the Duke was happy and that his depression from the negotiations with the Great Moon Kingdom was already swept away. The guards laughed in their hearts but kept a respectful look.

They slowly rode towards the Duke's Mansion.

With the cold wind blowing at him, Rody gradually calmed down. He noticed that there were a lot of pedestrians around, pointing at him with respect. Some of them even stopped and saluted him.

Rody was touched as he thought of the victorious mood of the citizens in the public square.

The pitiful ordinary citizens thought that the Empire would be stable as long as the Tulip Family was around. However, how much could the Tulip Family banner do?

Rody was sighing when his mind suddenly gave him a faint sense of warning. He then heard Randt roar loudly and fiercely knocked into him. Rody was immediately knocked down from the horse. He then heard the sound of something whiz past as Randt also fell from the horse. An arrow had struck Randt in the left arm. The arrow was extremely powerful to be able to pierce through Randt's arm.

A few guards shouted and immediately surrounded Rody. They pulled out their swords and looked around attentively.

The pedestrians on the streets were also in chaos. However, the guards stood firmly by Rody's side and did not allow anyone to get close.

Rody got up from the ground and looked at the top of a distant building. He saw a figure with a longbow. With a flash, the figure

disappeared.

“Alright! He has already escaped.” Rody spoke as he examined Randt’s injuries. Randt was extremely strong willed. Although his arm was bleeding and his face was pale, he did not even groan once.

Everyone got back on their horses and the guards surrounded Rody. They then picked up the pace and headed towards the Duke’s Mansion.

They hurried all the way back. When they arrived, Randt was immediately sent for treatment. Nicole felt extremely nervous when she heard of the attempted assassination.

After everyone had left, Rody pulled Nicole’s hand and whispered, “Do not worry. I am fine!”

Nicole started to calm down and then she asked, “Did you see who it was? In the Imperial Capital, who would want to assassinate you? Is it the Lionheart Family or is it the Great Moon Kingdom?” Nicole then paused and knitted her eyebrows. “Both seem unlikely. Even though Garoline is cunning and does not get along well with us, he would be more sensible rather than take such drastic action. The Great Moon Kingdom would also not do such a thing as they are trying to have peace negotiations.”

Rody thought for a moment and then his eyes lit up and said, “I know who he is.” He took a breath and continued. “Do you know a man named Dark? He seems to be a subordinate of your father. When I met him in the Northwest Region, he seemed to have a hatred for the Tulip Family. However, when I asked Sieg and the others, they apparently did not know who Dark is. Do you know this person?”

Chapter 102: Journey to the Southeast

Nicole had no impression of the name Dark, so Rody gave up pursuing.

Sieg, Gordon and all the other people who were with the late Duke could not recall that name. Even Nicole had never heard of Dark. Rody could not understand. Dark was an expert at archery and had a deep hatred for the Tulip Family. How could those people have not heard of him?

Did Dark deceive me? But his eyes showed extreme hatred and anger, and that did not seem to be fake.

After thinking for a long time, Rody still had no clue. Therefore, he could only order his guards to be more attentive.

News of the Duke being attacked by an assassin broke out. The news spread all over the Imperial Capital. That day, a lot of people had witnessed the incident on the street.

Abbas XI immediately ordered for the security soldiers to thoroughly investigate that incident and find the assassin within ten days. Apparently, His Majesty was so furious that he summoned and fiercely scolded the commanders of the security soldiers. When Rody heard that, he gave a wry smile thinking that His Majesty was angry not because an assassin attacked him but because the assassin did not manage to kill him.

The one that ended up experiencing hardships were the public security soldiers. Battalions of soldiers had to patrol the streets, day and night. They walked through every street in the Imperial Capital and left no stones unturned. Every pedestrian on the streets became an important suspect. According to the Duke, the assassin used a long bow and arrows. That caused inconveniences to all the shop owners of weapon shops in the Imperial Capital.

“What? You did not sell any bows and arrows? What about last

year? What about the year before last? What about three years ago? How can you be sure that the assassin, who intend to assassinate the Empire's greatest Duke of the Tulip Family, did not take a few years to plot that attack? What if the assassin bought the bow and arrows three years ago? Please show us all the transaction records from three years ago...There are no records? In that case, very simple. We shall handcuff you and you can follow us back to explain..."

"What? Your shop had never sold bows and arrows? That is still not good! The assassin had failed with the bow and arrow this time. Next time, he may use a sword! Stop talking nonsense and take out your transaction records from three years ago... What? You do not even sell swords here? You manufacture wheeled ballistae for the Empire? That is terrible! If that hateful assassin had obtained the large-scale weapons of mass destruction, then it will no longer just be a matter of safety for the Duke of Tulip Family. Even the Imperial Capital may suffer a large-scale terrorist attack! Stop talking nonsense and take out the records or follow us back to explain!"

"What did you say? You do not sell swords or any kind of weapons? How did you get arrested? Who are you? Shit! Your shop sells soy sauce? Which idiot arrested you?"

Everyone that had gone in or out the city gate in the past three days were all brought back to the security bureau. All the inns and clubhouses were also investigated several times. The prisons in the security bureau were quickly filled up. It was no longer possible to squeeze in those large groups of suspects in the already crowded prisons. The commander of the security soldiers felt helpless. But, finally, he had a good idea. He ordered for the doors and windows of the toilets, kitchen, stores of the security bureau to be replaced with iron doors and windows. Finally, they managed to create enough space to house all the remaining suspects.

When the soldiers in charge of interrogation saw so many

suspects, they immediately sped up the interrogation. Their eyes almost popped out and their chin already dropped to the ground. They could only brace themselves and work overtime to intensify the interrogation. The interrogation lasted for seven days and seven nights.

The soldiers dug out all information of their ancestors. In addition, they also found out when they entered the city, where they visited and how they went. However, after many sleepless nights, the security officials were disappointed with the results. From the suspects, they had uncovered a lot of culprits for old crimes. For example, seven years ago, one of them stole a horse from a Viscount's home. There was the leader of a bandit group who escaped from a fight between two factions six years ago. There was also a person who had kidnapped the Earl's concubine five years ago and had become a shopkeeper that sold soy sauce...

It could be said that this was a splendid achievement. After the strict investigation, the public security had greatly improved. Groups of overworked public security soldiers were patrolling the streets. It was the first time in hundreds of years since the death of Abbas the Great that safety had returned to the Imperial Capital. Honesty and stability prevailed throughout the Imperial Capital as many small swindlers and abductors were also arrested. In the future, that large-scale operation in the Imperial Capital would go down in history to have achieved a very high evaluation, Even though it did not achieve its original purpose of capturing the assassin, the improvement of the public security was obvious to everyone. When that was reported to His Majesty, His Majesty happily gave the order for the large-scale strict investigation to be carried out regularly every year. His Majesty also considered extending that throughout the Empire!

As such a strict investigative operation managed to strike at a large number of criminals, it was later referred to by the future generations as 'crackdown'...

After releasing all the innocent people, the commander of the security forces gritted his teeth and gave them another command to find the assassin by hook or by crook.

Therefore, those public security soldiers who had endured all this until their eyes turned red, started to weep. Those soldiers who had patrolled every street of the city until their shoes wore out also wept.

After ten days of hard work and strict investigations by the team of public security, they finally came up with some good results. They arrested a total of six robbers, ten rapists, seventeen repeated offenders for thievery and three powerful gang leaders.

Finally, the commander of the security soldiers, putting in a tremendous effort, took two days to write a voluminous hundred-thousand-words long report.

In the report, it was written that the arrested criminals were accomplices of the assassin.

At the same time, he reported that the plot to assassinate the Duke had been planned for a long time in an ambitious conspiracy. The purpose was to eliminate the meritorious Duke of the Tulip Family and subvert the rule of the Empire.

In the report, the commander of the public security argued from many different points of views and elaborated on each and every one of them. Finally, he arrived at the shocking conclusion:

It was not just an assassination but a premeditated scheme by domestic and foreign forces to subvert the rule of the Radiant Empire.

After the report was submitted, the commander of the security soldiers immediately called his subordinates to prepare a coffin. He invited the priest, personally selected a burial ground, and prepared some poison wine. Once His Majesty had finished reading the report, he would immediately commit suicide.

But he had not received any news from the Imperial Palace. The commander felt perturbed for two days and then finally received a commendation order from His Majesty the Emperor. Effectively, the commander had been miraculously given a second lease of life. He found out later that because his report was too long and profound, all the ministers, including His Majesty the Emperor, did not have the patience to even read half of his report. Therefore, they approved the report.

Even the soldiers of the Imperial Capital shed happy tears for him.

One morning, a carriage followed by a dozen warriors wearing civilian clothes slowly left the Imperial Capital through the South gate. When the garrison soldiers saw the documents containing the customs clearance, they immediately stood straight. They saluted in the most dignified manner towards the person in the carriage.

The group then left the Imperial Capital. After traveling for more than ten miles, the window of the carriage opened to reveal the heroic face of the Duke of Tulip Family.

Looking back at the disappearing outlines of the magnificent walls of the Imperial Capital, Rody smiled and said, "Are we on our way to the mountains in the South now? I heard that the mountain barbarians do not like to bathe. I wonder if this is true..."

Randt replied while on the horse, "Your Excellency the Duke! We have left the Imperial Capital! For your safety, you should not open the windows. The terrain here is more difficult, and it is more dangerous especially if someone ambushed us with arrows."

Rody nodded and closed the windows, but he sighed in his heart. If he had brought the Wolf Fang with him, he would not have to feel so oppressed, hiding in the carriage.

The Wolf Fang had officially been separated from the Central Cavalry by His Majesty. The missing numbers lost in the Northwest were replenished. This new cavalry was now no longer

part of the 'Lightning God's Whip' and instead was directly placed under Rody's command.

Although the soldiers were reluctant to be separated from what the Empire considered their most elite army, it was even more glorious to become the cavalry regiment serving the Empire's God of War, the Duke of Tulip Family.

When His Majesty the Emperor readily agreed to Rody's request, he had considered the fact that this twenty thousand cavalry would not be of much help in the South.

The mountain barbarians were not like the people of the grasslands. They divided themselves into hundreds or thousands depending on the size of their tribal camps. They were scattered around the vast complicated hilly terrain of the Southeast Region.

The Wolf Fang may be powerful but their cavalry would be less effective in the vast regions of the mountains. On the rugged mountain with steep terrain, the advantage of cavalries was lost. The Emperor and Marquis Garoline knew about this. That is why the Emperor pretended to be generous and gave the Wolf Fang to Rody.

Garoline had initially objected to this. Abusing his power as the Military Minister, he looked for excuses to reorganize the Wolf Fang and therefore delayed them for another few days. He wanted to make things as inconvenient as possible for Rody. However, His Majesty was pleased about the success of the peace negotiations and ordered Rody to immediately go to the South. Rody could not delay his departure. Therefore he took a group of guards from the Tulip Family and started his journey to the Southeast hills.

Chapter 103: Surprise Attack

The road to the South took them through the beautiful scenery of the mountains. Rody had never been to the South and greedily took in the scenery. As a result, they slowed down imperceptibly.

Rody and the others went from province to province using the highway as they headed towards the Southeast. He had started to relax as he traveled from one scenic spot to another.

Rody was not anxious to hurry to the Southeast Region as there was nothing urgent over there. The last time, there had been a war in the Northwest Region, and the war was something that could not be avoided. Naturally, he had to work day and night to resolve the crisis. However, this time, he was just sent to be a phony commanding officer, and the job was going to be extremely boring.

In the evening, Rody did not manage to reach a small town because they had traveled too slowly. As a result, they had to spend the night outdoors. Rody looked at the sky and gave a faint smile. "I think it is better to spend the night on the fields. With so many people, we should not be afraid of getting attacked by wolves."

A guard that initially came from the South laughed and replied, "Duke, you must be joking. There aren't many wolves in the South. However, the climate here is damp, so we will need to be careful of snakes and insects."

The guards were all originally soldiers in the army and were naturally proficient in setting up camps while on a march. Very quickly, they had already started a fire and had also set up a few tents.

After Rody had eaten, he chatted with his subordinates until it was night and then entered the tent to sleep.

Everyone was asleep except for four guards. The four guards chatted and drank over the campfire as the night started to pass.

Rody slept in his tent, and from time to time, he could hear the sounds of the insects. The damp climate of the South was not suitable for him especially when it was almost winter. The damp cold was like a sharp knife piercing into his bones. Sleeping inside a tent in an open field was a problem since the tent felt humid and stuffy. It took quite a while before he could fall asleep.

The night soon ended and the eastern sky started to turn bright. Rody was still sound asleep when he suddenly heard a cry of alarm. Soon after that, there were angry yelling and hurried footsteps. There was also the sound of swords being unsheathed.

Rody immediately got up and ran out of the tent. He saw that the campfire had been extinguished, and a guard was lying down on the floor. Stuck in his shoulder was a wolf-fang arrow. The guard's eyes were closed, and he seemed to have fainted.

The guards that were sitting at the campfire were suddenly shot at with an arrow. The other guards had quickly identified that the arrow was shot from above one of the trees. They were well trained and had already drawn their weapons. They then rushed into the woods, under cover of the dense foliage, towards that tree.

Randt saw Rody come out from the tent. He immediately notified several guards to surround and protect Rody.

After a short moment, a few of the guards returned from the woods looking depressed. Apparently, they did not manage to catch the assailant. A guard handed him a white cloth containing a message. The words were written in the language of the Empire.

“I will follow you. Once I have the chance, I will slit your throat with a knife. I will pierce your heart with an arrow!”

Rody's face sank as he read the words. He gritted his teeth and tore the cloth apart. The other guards were also furious. They were all warriors who valued honor. That was why they felt angry when the assassin played tricks on them.

His subordinates carefully examined the guard who was injured. They found that the guard could not wake up. Feeling helpless, they waited until it was dawn. After that, they traveled to a small town and looked for a doctor. They found that the arrow head was laced with an anesthetic from the Northwest Region. This anesthetic was extremely powerful. The guard was not injured but he would not be able to wake up in two days. Even after he woke up, he would still be unable to walk for a few more days.

Rody sighed and could only leave the guard behind in that town. He also paid the doctor a lot of gold coins.

Everybody stayed in the town for the night. This time, Randt had ordered for the guards to be on alert. Two more people were committed to the night watch and even a secret sentry was set up.

However, that night, nothing strange happened. After dawn, Rody ordered to continue the journey.

They did not dare to sleep in the wild and rushed throughout the day so that they could reach the next town before nightfall. Rody did not want to risk revealing his identity. So, he went to an inn and booked the whole inn for the night.

That night, the inn was also heavily guarded. However, around the middle of the night, another guard was shot by an arrow. He was pushing a door open when he heard a piercing sound and found an arrow sticking out of his thigh.

Hearing the miserable cry of the guard, a few of the other guards immediately pulled out their swords and quickly identified the direction of the arrows with their sharp eyes. Randt took a few people and immediately gave chase but the assailant had already escaped.

When Randt came back, there was another cloth with a message. It was written in a bold handwriting. "The next one could be you!"

Rody gritted his teeth hatefully. Fortunately, Dark was reluctant

to hurt the innocent. In those two days, his two arrows had not caused any fatal injury but only caused the guards to lose their mobility temporarily.

Rody felt helpless. Once again, he left the injured guard in the town and continued to hurry on ahead.

Although the group had taken extra precautions, Dark continued to remain elusive and his skill in archery was matchless. The arrows he shot could fly further compared to arrows shot by an ordinary person. Even if Rody could block the arrows, it would be difficult for them to detect it. Every time someone was shot by an arrow, the guards would give chase, but Dark would have disappeared without a trace.

Dark was a hunter of the grasslands. Hunting cunning wolves every day had sharpened his skills incredibly. He was invincible when he used that same skill for surprise attacks.

Rody's group traveled for another two days, and another two guards were injured during those two days.

He saw that only eleven of the original fifteen subordinates remained. Rody secretly gritted his teeth. He understood that Dark wanted to slowly eliminate his subordinates. At that rate, nobody would be left by his side even before he could reach the Southeast.

Rody was furious as he had never been outmaneuvered so badly since his journey to the Northwest.

Randt also looked pale. He wanted to find the assassin and immediately kill him.

The next day, Rody ordered for the group to travel slowly. They had deliberately slowed down and traveled until it was dark. After that, Rody ordered for them to camp in the wilds. He saw that the sky had started to turn dark and whispered to Randt, "Randt. Take a look at the surrounding terrain. Do you see that hillslope?"

Randt nodded as he glanced at the slope. He then frowned and

asked, “Your Excellency. Is there a problem?”

Rody raised his eyebrows as he replied, “The surrounding terrain are all on low ground except that hill. If I were to hide in that hill, I would have a good panoramic view of this place. Hehe... If I were an assassin and I wanted to find a place to snipe with arrows, that hill would be the best place!”

Randt’s eyes lit up as he said, “Your Excellency. Do you mean...”

Rody nodded and said, “Tonight, that assassin will definitely come and attack again. I believe that he will choose that location to shoot his arrows. Take two people with you and quickly hide in the hills! If you see him, act immediately! If we wait until he shoots before we chase him, we will absolutely not be able to catch him!”

Randt was pleasantly surprised and showed admiration as he repeatedly nodded his head. He quickly gave an order, and the three guards left in large strides.

Rody had made ample preparations. That night, nobody slept. However, they entered their tent and pretended to sleep so that they could lure the assailant. They did not even leave a guard outside.

Early the next morning, they heard a sharp whistle at the hill in the distance. A group of guards immediately sprang up and rushed towards the hill.

Rody ran the fastest and reached the hillside in a short moment. He then saw Randt with one foot stepping on a person. His broadsword was placed at his back. The man was trembling at Randt’s feet and begging for mercy. Next to the ground was a set of bow and arrows.

Rody saw that the man was not Dark and thought to himself. Was I wrong? The assailant is not Dark?

He then listened to Randt’s report and found out that when the man went up the mountains, Randt and the two other guards

ambushed him. However, before any action could be taken, the man saw their swords and immediately threw himself on the ground in fear. He was captured easily. When Randt placed his broadsword on the man's back, the man became even more frightened and begged for his life.

The guards frowned but Rody felt puzzled. He coldly asked for the man's head to be lifted up and carefully questioned him.

The man knelt on the ground. His tears streamed down as he stammered, "I am just a person from the village. Earlier today, a stranger gave me a gold coin and asked me to climb up this mountain in the evening with a bow and arrow. I thought that he was suspicious and did not dare to agree but he said that... if I did this, he would give me another gold coin the next day."

Rody stamped his feet in frustration. He saw the pale man and noticed that he was wearing a simple farmer's shirt. Rody then waved his hand so that Randt would release him.

Suddenly, there were two 'woosh' sounds. Before the sound disappeared, a breeze of wind could be felt. Rody reacted quickly and raised his sword. After that, a 'ting' sound could be heard as the wolf-fang arrow slammed into the wall of the hill.

There was a cry as one of the other guards was also hit by an arrow.

Everyone immediately surrounded Rody and protected him. They clenched the swords in their hands as they looked around vigilantly.

In the distance, below the hill, stood a silhouette. The man was holding a peculiar longbow as he looked at Rody and the others on the slope. Suddenly he exclaimed, "Duke of Tulip! Do you think you can deceive me with your trap?"

Rody's mind stirred as he recognized Dark's voice. He gently pushed Randt who was standing in front of him and walked out as

he shouted, "Dark! You are being too sneaky. Didn't you say you want to kill me? Why are you hiding? Come and fight me in the open! If you can beat me, my life is yours!"

Dark gave a long laugh and then he replied coldly, "I am not stupid. Duke of Tulip! I may hate you but I know that I am no match for you! Anyway, I am here for vengeance, not to compete with you! I will sneak around, or whatever, as long as I get to kill you! Hehe, wait for me to take your life!"

Rody was extremely angry. He suddenly picked up the bow and arrow on the floor, nocked an arrow and shot at Dark.

However, the two of them were very far away and the bow in Rody's hands was just an ordinary wooden hunting bow. The arrow only flew for a short distance before it lost its momentum and dropped to the ground.

Dark laughed loudly. His voice was full of pride and mockery. Rody was furious and pulled the bow again only to hear a snap. He had used too much force in his rage and the bow had broken.

Dark's laughter gradually stopped and he coldly shouted, "Duke! I do not want to kill needlessly! Otherwise, your subordinates would have died long ago! Even tonight when your men are standing on top of the hill! They are just live targets!"

Having said that, Dark sped away as he laughed. His figure soon vanished in the distance.

Rody was furious. When he was in the Northwest, he had no problem dealing with thousands and thousands of enemies, with their innumerable swords and weapons. But he was helpless with just this one single assailant. He felt both angry and ashamed.

The guards felt depressed. They waited until it was daybreak before they journeyed on. Their faces were glum. They, the glorious warriors under the Tulip Family banner, had been outmaneuvered by that lone assailant. They could not speak along

the whole journey.

That afternoon, they arrived at a small town. Rody sent the injured guard for treatment. He stayed back in his room to think of a way out of his dilemma.

Andy had been silent all this while. For this journey, Rody had not brought along Andy's skeleton. Otherwise, with Andy's superior magic skill, solving this problem would have been an easy matter. However, Rody and Andy once had a detailed discussion. Andy's energy was limited. The more it was used the less Andy had left. When all his energy was used up, his soul would just vanish. That was why, in these 200 years, he was mostly asleep. Even after he got to know Rody, he normally limited his skeletal movements. Using the God's Smile connection enabled Andy to minimize the depletion of his energy.

Rody was still depressed when Andy suddenly cried, "There's a way! Maybe it will work..."

Chapter 104: Ten Year Agreement

Everybody stayed in that town for two days. The guards had started to think of asking the local garrison to help escort the Duke as well. If there were hundreds of soldiers escorting, even the brave assassin would not dare to attack.

However, that idea was rejected by some of the guards even before it was proposed. They all had the same thoughts. They were the dignified guards of the Duke of the Tulip Family. If they could not protect the Duke from a single-handed assassin and had to resort to getting help from the local garrison, then they would be ridiculed. If that happened, they would be better off committing suicide than die of shame.

Rody spent a long time in his room. When he came out, the haziness on his face had gone. He ordered his soldiers to stay in town for two days. He also did not leave any soldier to guard outside his room at night.

Dark was actually hiding among Rody's traveling group. He hid in an abandoned attic near to the place where the group was staying in. In the past two days, Dark stayed in the attic as he observed the movement of Rody and his group. He watched passively as strict precautions were taken. They did not leave any guards to watch at night and they also did not leave the room much for outdoor activities during the day. Rody hid in the room and all daily requirements were delivered to him. For two days, Dark did not manage to find any opportunity to attack.

However, Dark had excellent patience. In the grassland, he often needed to pursue a wolf for several days before he could kill it. He would also not feel tired from the hard work. In fact, he was more energetic as the target was his enemy. He would not feel agitated even if he needed to wait for twenty days to gain an opportunity. Moreover, the Duke would not be able to hide in the town forever.

On the third day, at around noon time, Dark noticed something strange!

He saw that the door of the room where the Duke was staying in had opened. Dark thought that the Duke was about to continue his journey when they took out two horses. However, only two of Rody's subordinates were on the horses. The two whipped their horses and rushed off towards the South. After waiting for a while, another two horses appeared. Two guards rode the horses and headed towards the East. Dark waited for a while more and once again, another two guards on horses came out from the yard. Those two rode towards the North.

Dark was bewildered. After all, he was only one person. He hesitated for a long time and finally decided to change his tactic. Anyway, it would not be wrong to continue following the Duke.

However, in the afternoon, when the guards who left earlier did not return, Dark's heart was filled with mysterious doubts.

When Dark was feeling confused, a carriage finally came out. The remaining guards were riding their horses and guarding the carriage on all sides. They surrounded the carriage and headed southwards.

Dark gritted his teeth and waited for the carriage to move further away before leaving the attic. He then he covered his tracks before pursuing the carriage.

All along the way, Dark noticed that the carriage was moving extremely quickly. Dark sneered in his heart. What's wrong? Running away in fear?

Dark followed from the back as he sneered. He then saw the carriage move faster and faster. Suddenly, it turned into a small path.

Thinking of using the small path to get rid of me? Dark sneered. I can even chase the most cunning wolves let alone so many people!

He did not hesitate and immediately followed the carriage.

In the distance, Dark saw the horses and the carriage quickly entered a small grove. Dark vigilantly observed from behind for a while. Finally, he gritted his teeth and followed the carriage as well.

After running a few steps, he noticed that the distant carriage had stopped in the middle of the woods. Those few guards were missing.

Dark frowned and became more vigilant. He hid behind a tree and observed carefully for a long time. Suddenly, he realized. They had abandoned their carriage and escaped on horses!

Although he thought of that, he still carefully jumped from tree to tree and slowly approached the carriage. When he was at the front, he saw that the carriage door was open and that the carriage was empty.

Dark felt surprised and angry as he whispered, “Well played! The Duke of the Tulip Family had actually run away!” He then jumped down the tree and looked at the horseshoe prints on the floor. However, he felt something suspicious after looking at them. The horseshoe prints on the floor showed that the guards had scattered in all directions.

Dark hatefully took out his scimitar and ferociously slashed at the carriage. His face had turned pale.

While he was feeling angry, he suddenly heard a voice coming from a distance. “Mister Dark! Are you looking for me?”

Dark quickly turned around and saw a person standing next to a tree looking indifferent. That person was the man he wanted to kill, The Duke of Tulip Family.

Dark’s heart was beating fiercely. He looked around, and his heart turned cold.

He saw that he was surrounded by several groups of soldiers with

two soldiers in each group. They had blocked him from all directions. They held their swords as they slowly approached him.

Dark's expression changed as he immediately took out his longbow and shot an arrow at Rody. From far, he heard Rody laugh coldly and dodge the arrow by moving behind a tree. The arrow missed its target. Dark was shocked as he understood that it was a trap. They had lured him into the woods and made him unable to use his bow and arrow effectively. In the dense woods, the power of the bow and arrow was greatly reduced.

He noticed that Rody's guards were slowly getting closer from all directions using the trees as covers. The encircled space around him was getting smaller. Taking a deep breath, he threw down his bow and took out his scimitar. He fiercely shouted, "Come on!"

The guards had already completely surrounded Dark but they did not approach any further. Instead, they gnashed their teeth and glared at Dark as they waited for the Duke's order. Once the order was given, they would rush forward and cut Dark to pieces.

Rody sighed. He separated the guards and walked to the front. He looked at Dark with a trace of frustration and said, "Mister Dark! Long time no see!"

Dark snorted coldly. He then slashed at an empty space and shouted, "Stop talking nonsense! If you want my life, come and take it!"

Rody frowned and lightly said, "Since the start, Mister Dark is the one aiming for my life. I have never taken the initiative to provoke you."

Dark spat as he stared at Rody and shouted, "I already said I will kill you! However, I ended up being trapped by you today! There is nothing left to say!"

Rody pondered for a moment. He then looked at Dark's face and frowned. "Mister Dark, that day, in the Watt Fortress, you said

that the late... my father killed your brother. What happened? I have asked the old soldiers in the army but they do not seem to know you. Can you tell me what actually happened?"

Dark's expression changed. His eyes were full of resentment and he gritted his teeth. He asked, "Why are you asking all this?"

Rody gave a faint smile and replied, "Whatever the case, you had saved my life. If it were not for you, I would have died in the Northwest grasslands."

"Fine!" Dark hatefully said, "Nothing bad will happen even if I tell you! My brother was one of the captains of the cavalry, serving under your father! As for me, I did not have any important post in the military. Naturally, no one would know me! On the other hand, your father was the Commander-in-Chief of a large army and had killed a countless number of people. Naturally, he would not care about the name of a captain's little brother!"

"Oh?" Rody nodded and then asked. "So, why did your brother die?"

Dark's eyes turned red as he stared at Rody and said, "In a battle, my brother was late in providing support according to the specified time by the late Duke. This caused the other barracks to suffer heavy losses. The late Duke was furious and executed my brother according to the martial law! Hmph! He was just late! However, the Duke refused to listen to my brother's explanation! The enemy had dispatched small groups of armies to obstruct all along the way. My brother did not rest as he took his soldiers and fought for two hundred miles, but he eventually reached the late Duke! But... but your father still said he violated the military order and executed him. My pitiful brother. When he was executed, he was still covered in the fresh blood of the enemies! Was that his reward for fighting desperately for the nation?"

Dark's voice choked as he finished speaking. His sharp eyes glared at Rody. Randt was alarmed and slowly stood beside Rody.

He raised his broadsword and looked at Dark vigilantly to prevent any unexpected attack.

Rody was sad. For a moment, he did not know what to say. He was ignorant as to what happened then. However, he had been in the army for some time and had learned from Sieg and the others that the late Duke was very strict and strictly enforced military law. When Sieg and the others talked about it, they had an anxious look on their faces. Having heard Dark's story, he believed that most of it were true.

Rody had experienced a lot of killing and understood that military orders must be obeyed and that kindness must not be shown. Although he felt that the late Duke was too cold hearted, he understood that the late Duke also did not have a choice and had to hold the captain responsible.

After thinking for a while, Rody slowly said, "Mister Dark... you... you can go!"

"What?" Before Dark could speak, Randt had already cried out.

Dark's expression changed. He looked at Rody gloomily and said, "Duke of Tulip Family! What tricks are you up to? Are you planning to use some ways to punish me?"

Rody shook his head. He waved his hand to tell Randt not to speak. After that, he looked at Dark and continued, "Mister Dark! That day you saved me and my companion! By right, I owe you two lives! I spared your life once in Watt Fortress and paid back a debt. Today, I will spare you again! From now on, we do not owe each other anything!"

Dark looked confused as he gritted his teeth and said, "You are really letting me go?"

Rody nodded and sighed, "Although you hate me, but I do not hate you. Although you had attacked me in the past few days and have injured my guards, but you did not kill them. This shows that

you do not slaughter innocent people. Had you killed a single person, I will not let you go today!”

Dark shook his head in disbelief. He still looked fierce and said, “Duke of Tulip Family! You better not say these kinds of words! Even if you let me go, I will definitely not let you go! When I see an opportunity, I will still come and kill you!”

Rody nodded and suddenly smiled. He said, “Mister Dark. I will spare you your life today but you have to promise me one thing!”

Without waiting for Dark to speak Rody continued, “Do not give me any trouble for three years! After three years, if I am not dead, feel free to come and find me. I will give you an opportunity for a fair fight!”

“What?” Dark sneered as he heard this. He was about to open his mouth to refuse.

Rody immediately replied, “Dark! I may be saying too much, but you are also a person of the Empire! You should know my identity and my current influence in the Empire! Reuenthal is glaring at the Empire from the Northwest Region! The southern mountain tribes are constantly causing disorders! The Northern Roland Continent armies are also getting ready to fight! Turbulence is everywhere. Problems may arise at any time! Think of the consequences if I were to die right now! With the presence of the Tulip Family war banner in the Empire, the enemies from all areas will not dare to create chaos. However, it will be a heavy blow for the Empire if the Tulip Family war banner falls. There will be chaos. Millions of ordinary citizens would be caught up in the flames of war, and countless families will fall apart! Dark, are you cold-hearted enough to ignore this?”

After saying those last few sentences, Rody’s expression turned serious.

Dark’s body trembled fiercely, and his eyes showed a confused expression. Rody’s voice was like a hammer pounding on his heart.

He thought of the consequences mentioned by Rody. Cold sweat gradually appeared on his forehead. His face turned extremely pale.

Rody coldly said, "Mister Dark. You are also a warrior and are full of righteousness! Do you have the heart to see these things happen?"

Suddenly, Dark raised his head and looked straight at Rody. He asked without sounding afraid, "Duke of Tulip Family! In this case, what do you mean by three years? Are you saying you can solve all these in two years?"

Rody sighed and replied, "I do not know but... I will do what I can!" In Rody's heart, he secretly thought, Three years? I am afraid, I cannot solve these problems even in ten years! However, after three years, I will stop being the Duke of Tulip Family. Then, when I am gone, you can go and take revenge on the real Duke of Tulip Family!

Dark's eyes showed determination as he forcefully threw his scimitar on the ground. He then loudly said, "Fine! I promise you!" After that, he looked at Rody and coldly said, "Are you not afraid that I will go back on my promise? Are you not afraid that once I am gone, I will come back and try to assassinate you?"

Rody laughed and replied, "I judge people with my own eyes! If I have judged you wrongly, I deserve to be killed!" He then thought in his heart. You dare to come again? I have already repaid my debts. If I were to catch you again, I will no longer be lenient. I can easily harden my heart and kill a few people.

Dark nodded and turned to his left without looking at Rody. Rody gave a signal with his eyes and a few guards opened the way and allowed Dark to leave.

Dark walked for about a hundred steps, then he suddenly stopped and turned back. He then loudly said, "Duke of Tulip Family! I am afraid that three years will not be enough! I will give you ten years!

I am full of resentment, but I am not heartless!”

After that, Dark left in large strides.

Rody gave a wry smile when he heard that. Ten years? This is good! Ten years later, go and take revenge on the real Seth! You actually hate the Duke of Tulip Family. I am just an imposter...”

Somewhere in the Imperial Capital, someone felt a sudden cold shiver on his back in the middle of his sleep. He then rolled over and went back to sleep.

Chapter 105: The Welcome Ceremony

The rest of the journey went well. Rody and his group eventually arrived at the Purple Leaf City in the Southeast.

The Purple Leaf City was located in the Southeast of the Empire. It was the capital city of Xier Province. This city could accommodate millions of people and was the largest city in the Southeast. The city was built two hundred years ago, during the era of Abbas the Great. In those years, Abbas the Great went on an expedition all over the continent and had conquered the South. In order to defend the stability in the South, he put in great efforts to build that city.

The city walls were at least ten li long. The walls were tall and strong. Even the lowest part of the wall was about fifteen meters high. The width of the city's walls was almost comparable to the walls of the Imperial Capital. The walls were wide enough to accommodate four horses walking side by side on top of it. Below the walls was a several meters deep moat that was connected to the Purple Leaf River.

As the city was originally used as the first military fortress in the Southeast, the military facilities on the city's walls were all complete. In the Purple Leaf City, they had all kinds of armament and had ample reserves. Their food supply was enough to provide for one hundred thousand soldiers in the army for three years!

After two hundred years, the city had developed water transportation as it was located at the riverside of the Purple Leaf River. As the Purple Leaf City was also the capital city of the Xier province, the businesses and commercial trades in the city were flourishing extremely well. After two hundred years of peace and prosperity, that city had developed into the largest city in the Southern Region. In the Empire, it was referred to as the 'Southern Capital'.

Before Rody arrived in the city, the Governors-General of the three provinces in the Southeast had already gathered in the Purple Leaf City. They waited to greet the Southeast Special Envoy sent by His Majesty. After all, he was the special envoy sent by His Majesty and was also the Duke, the heir of the Tulip Family. The Tulip Family was the most prominent family in the Empire. When the Tulip Family's name was referred to anywhere in the Empire, it could easily shake an entire region.

After they had received the report, the three Governors-General immediately brought a large number of people out of the city to grandly greet Rody. Rody and his subordinates saw a large group of people standing at the entrance of the city from a distance. The guards of honor, by the roadside, wore colorful clothes and looked full of enthusiasm.

The Governor-General of Xier stood in the middle. After all, he was the head of the local officials in the city. The Governors-General of the other two provinces stood on either side. They headed towards Rody's carriage with smiles on their faces. Before Rody's guards could act, one of the Governors-General immediately opened the door of the carriage while another rushed to help Rody get down from the carriage.

They were surprised when they saw Rody.

Since they were located in the Southern Region of the Empire, before they received the order, they had inquired about the Duke. They knew that the Duke had just inherited the title not long ago and was still very young. However, they still could not help but feel shocked when they met him in person. They never expected the Duke to be really so young. He did not seem to have even reached twenty years old.

They felt even more unconvinced and thought: This young Duke is the Commander-in-chief who had defeated a hundred thousand soldiers of the grassland army in the Northwest? Looking at the young Duke carefully, he still does not seem to be such a person.

Xier's Governor-General that stood in the middle was a cunning and deceitful person. When he saw the young Duke, he felt very relaxed and thought: A young man like him will have a limit even if he is powerful. As long as I coax him well, then everything will be simple...

The other two Governors-General flattered Rody and said things like 'Young and promising' and 'Having a bright future'. Rody had heard those compliments thousands of times before and did not care anymore.

Fortunately, Rody had experienced many occasions like that. He just knitted his eyebrows and laughed a little. After that, he joined them in flattering others.

Everyone played the drums and trumpets as they welcomed Rody into the city. A lot of ordinary citizens came to watch the excitement as they knew that the Empire's distinguished Duke of the Tulip Family had arrived. They craned their necks and watched from afar. They did not dare to approach as the ferocious soldiers would whip the ones that got too close. The citizens felt angry but they did not dare to say anything. They could only point their fingers from afar.

Rody observed the scene and secretly frowned. He coldly looked at the Xier's Governor-General and saw his proud smile. Rody's gaze gradually became cold.

When they arrived at the Governor-General's mansion, the servants led Rody's subordinates to the side for them to rest. A large number of distinguished personages were waiting in the main hall of the Governor-General's mansion. Rody walked into the hall, and the three Governors-General bowed and followed suit. The powerful distinguished families swarmed Rody. Rody raised his spirit as he tried to cope with them. He listened to the endless amounts of compliments and simply smiled in reply.

Rody saw that those influential people looked extremely fat.

They had a greedy gaze and a respectful expression. None of them looked like good people.

Everybody made a racket for a long time. Rody thought that it was in bad taste and could not help but yawn.

Xier's Governor-General's eyes lit up. He saw Rody yawn and immediately said loudly, "His Excellency the Duke have traveled far and must be tired. Now is lunch time! This humble subordinate has already prepared the food! Your Excellency the Duke, please enjoy it!"

He then clapped his hands and two side doors to the main hall opened at the same time. Two groups of young and charming women wearing bright and colorful clothes slowly walked into the hall. Each woman carried a tray. On every tray were silver plates, some were big while some were small. Each woman served a table. When the plates were placed on the table, Rody was stunned.

Rody saw the women came in one after another, carrying a variety of magnificent dishes. That was an eye-opener for Rody. He saw more than a dozen silver plates of various sizes, with all types of colorful dishes, placed on the table in front of him. Rody had never smelled or seen most of those dishes before.

The food was obviously prepared by an expert. It looked extremely pleasing to the eye, and the smell stimulated the appetite. Those who ate it would definitely lick their fingers.

Rody was amazed as the food served here could not even be found at the banquet in the Imperial Palace.

After that, Rody saw two topless, robust men carry a huge wine barrel and placed it in the middle of the main hall. Rody looked carefully and noticed that the wine barrel was made of pure gold. After that, a beautiful woman wearing a short dress walked into the hall.

She looked like she was about twenty years old. The dress that

she wore exposed her slim arms and legs and revealed her fair skin. Her blouse was so short that her waistline was also exposed. She had a pair of pretty eyebrows and sparkling eyes which made her look very attractive. She walked in slowly and elegantly. She was barefooted and had a small golden anklet with bells on her foot. The bells jingled with every step she took.

She slowly walked to the front of the golden wine barrel and filled a golden wine cup with the wine. She then walked to the front of Rody's table and slowly knelt down. As she offered the golden wine cup in her hand to Rody, she said with her sweet voice, "Your Excellency the Duke, please drink!"

Rody looked at the beautiful woman in front of him. He could not help but turned his gaze to Xier's Governor-General at a side. He then lightly said, "You must have put a lot of thought into this, Governor."

Xier's Governor-General was happy. He nodded and laughed, "I don't dare to! Your Excellency the Duke! This is one of the most beautiful women in Purple Leaf City. Not everyone gets a chance to see her. However, we knew that the Duke of Tulip family is coming today, so we invited her to serve Your Excellency a drink."

Rody nodded his head. He gazed at the beauty and gently received the cup of wine. Rody then looked around and loudly said, "Everyone! I have been appointed by His Majesty as the Southeast Special Envoy! I will be straightforward. I just hope that all of you can be of great help. Everybody do a proper good job, and then I can go and report back to His Majesty."

After some applause, everybody raised their cups of wine and finished the wine.

Xier's Governor General's face was smiling. His eyes twinkled in splendor. He whispered to a servant beside him. The servant then immediately walked out the main hall using the side door.

A little while later, they heard a clear and melodious sound. Both

of the doors at the side entrance gradually opened. A rolling platform was pushed into the main hall. Sitting on the platform was a young woman in a white dress. In front of her was a harp that was as tall as a person. She gently plucked the strings of the harp with the slender fingers of her delicate hands. The harp immediately produced a beautiful and pleasant music.

The sound of some light footsteps entered the main hall from both entrances. There were about twenty young women. They were all beautiful and charming. They slowly walked to the side of the nobles and gently sat next to them. Those young women spoke softly in a sweet voice. Some of them helped the nobles refill their wine while others gently embraced the nobles. Suddenly, Rody was stunned as he never expected that the mansion of the proud and dignified General-Governor of the Empire would be like that. That place was supposed to be used to handle official and important matters, but right now, it was not different from the brothel in the Imperial Capital.

While Rody was still shocked, a young woman wearing a red dress slowly sat next to him. She gently smiled at him, as her soft and fragrant body moved closer.

That Xier's Governor-General looked pleased with himself as he embraced a woman. He secretly thought to himself. Fortunately, I had inquired about the Duke's preferences after receiving His Majesty's orders. Fortunately, the Duke was also someone who also loves wine and was a pleasure-seeking person. He must be very satisfied with my preparations.

Just when Rody was still confused and unable to respond, a guard outside the main hall suddenly shouted, "The Regiment Commander, Camus, has arrived!"

Rody immediately became clear headed and pushed away the young woman in a red dress next to him. The sound of leather boots could be heard, and then an old military officer wearing the uniform of a senior commander strode forward into the hall.

He looked like he was older than fifty years old. He was tall, robust and had broad shoulders. Although his hair had turned gray, his back was still straight.

The Regiment Commander, Camus, walked forward into the main hall. The movements of the surrounding people that were enjoying the wine were sluggish. Camus gave a strange and humble gaze towards the surrounding people.

Camus's gaze was indifferent as he looked around. Suddenly, his eyes showed astonishment. He walked to the middle of the main hall and kicked to knock over the golden barrel of wine. The smell of the wine spread throughout the main hall.

The crowd was shocked as Camus stood in front of Rody. His eyes looked straight at Rody as he casually said, "Southern Legion Regiment Commander, Camus, greets Your Excellency the Duke."

Chapter 106: The Chaos in the Southeast

All the nobles and officials in the main hall turned pale with fright when they saw Camus violently kick over the golden wine barrel. They did not dare to say anything because of Camus' status. Instead, they secretly took a look at the expressions of the Xier's Governor-General and the Duke.

Xier's Governor-General showed an unpleasant expression, but the person in front of him was a commander that commanded hundreds of thousands of soldiers. As a result, he did not dare to get angry at Camus even though he was the Governor-General. His facial muscles continued to tremble and he could not help but look at Rody.

Rody was excited in his heart, but he showed a calm expression. He thought of the information about Camus, which he had obtained from asking Sieg and Nicole.

Camus was the Regiment Commander of the Southern Legion. At that moment, he was fifty-three years old. When he was eighteen, he had obtained the title of a Grade 1 swordsman. He was an ordinary citizen and had joined the military after he graduated.

At first, he served as the Deputy Commander of the First Cavalry Regiment in the Northwest. After that, he was promoted to Commander. When the late Duke of Tulip was appointed as the Regiment Commander of the Northwest Legion, Camus was promoted as the Deputy Regiment Commander.

After he was transferred to the Central Cavalry, he continued to serve as the late Duke's assistant and became the Deputy Regiment Commander of the 'Lightning God's Whip'.

Even though he was born as an ordinary civilian, he became one of the Empire's highest ranking officer within twenty years. After that, the Emperor had bestowed the title of Baron onto him. Three years later, he became an Earl.

Since the founding of the Empire, not including the people that founded the nation, there were less than ten people who started off as an ordinary civilian and then rose through the ranks and obtained the title of an Earl.

Camus was resolute and courageous. He also knew how to use tactics. His only shortcoming was that he was extremely proud. He had served as the aide of the Duke of Tulip for twenty years. However, Camus finally severed his relationship with the late Duke for some unknown reasons. Originally, Camus could be considered the second-best commander after the late Duke of Tulip. However, they suddenly had a falling out due to some unknown reason, and Camus had resigned from the 'Lightning God's Whip'. Eventually, Camus was transferred to the South and was appointed as the Regiment Commander of the Southern Legion. In the last five years, ever since the death of the late Duke, he had never returned to the Imperial Capital.

It was not a secret to the nobles that the Regiment Commander, Camus and late Duke of the Tulip Family were on bad terms. This time, the Emperor had chosen to send Rody to where Camus was instead of anywhere else. This would probably make things more even more difficult for Rody.

A few years ago, the southern hill tribes had staged a rebellion. This fiercely shook the three Southeast provinces. The Xier province was located nearest to the mountains. After hundreds of years, their blood was mixed as the people intermarried with one another. As a result, many of the residents were descendants of the mountain tribes. That rebellion nearly engulfed the entire Xier province. Camus relied on his own marvelous military ability. He cleverly used various tricks to sow discord between the mountain tribes and defeated them one by one. Finally, the mountain barbarians were driven back to the mountains.

However, Camus was not a bloodthirsty person. After he had crushed the rebel forces, he took advantage of the hatred between

the mountain tribes and separated them. He also skillfully balanced the power of the three provinces. This was especially true for the Xier province as thirty percent of the locals in the Xier province were the mountain tribes. There was an intense hatred between the people of the Empire and the mountain tribes. The situation in the Southeast only stabilized because Camus was watching over these provinces.

In the last few years, the people of the grasslands had separated from the Empire and formed the Great Moon Kingdom. As a result, the mountain tribes were greatly influenced and many ambitious people thought of emulating the Great Moon Kingdom. They wanted to break away from the Empire's rule. However, Camus' presence in the South deterred the mountain tribes from doing anything rash.

Rody really admired and respected the Regiment Commander Camus. After all, he was not really the Duke of Tulip Family and did not know about the enmity between Camus and the Tulip Family. As a young soldier of the Empire, he just revered and respected Camus.

Taking a deep breath, Rody spoke in a calm voice, "Your Excellency Camus, please have a seat. I just arrived in the Purple Leaf City today. I was wondering when to pay you a visit at the Southeast barracks. However, you are already here."

Camus just nodded his head. He then looked at Rody and coldly said, "Your Excellency the Duke, I am not here to drink wine. I just have an important matter to discuss with the Governor-General. In my opinion, there is no more need to drink the wine. Everybody is dismissed!"

Camus turned his body and directed that last sentence to the other nobles.

"Important matter?" Rody frowned.

Camus calmly looked at Rody and the Governor-General as he

coldly said, “Governor-General, please give the order! Starting from today, the Purple Leaf City will be on alert! The whole of Xier Province will be on alert, and all the defenders must be ready for combat. My Southern Legion will also cooperate with the native defenders. I had received the latest news that the mountain people are beginning to move.”

“What?” The Governor-General immediately stood up and stammered, “No... This cannot be... The day before yesterday, the elders of the tribes just came to visit me...”

Camus sneered and mocked him, “And he also gave you a few beautiful mountain women. Am I right?”

“Nonsense! There was no such thing!” The Governor-General’s face turned red, and then he said respectfully, “Since Camus said that there are important matters to discuss, the banquet shall end here now... Your Excellency the Duke, is that alright with you?”

Rody stood up and loudly replied, “I was entrusted by His Majesty! Since there is an important military task, this must not be delayed! The banquet will end right away!”

Since the Governor-General and the Duke had spoken, the guests in the hall immediately got up and started to leave. Some of them were shocked and frightened by what Camus said earlier. They were afraid that something serious was about to happen. There were even some that had already planned their escape from the Southeast and had already figured out how to protect their property...

The young women who accompanied them to drink wine also left the main hall. In a short time, the only people left in the main hall was Rody, Camus and the three Governors-General of the Southeast provinces.

Camus looked serious and spoke sternly, “Governors-General, the current situation is very complicated. According to the latest information I received, nineteen mountain tribes held an assembly

ten days ago, at the Flame Tribe's Nine Songs Mountain. The nineteen mountain tribes had already elected the Flame Tribe's Wuya as the Tribal Chief!"

"Tribal Chief!" Xier's Governor-General's expression changed as he loudly shouted, "Are they crazy? According to the decree of the Empire, the tribes are not allowed to appoint a tribal chief! They are even forming alliances now. Do they want to start a rebellion?" The other two Governors-General's expression also changed.

Camus looked at the silent Rody and slowly said, "Rebellion? Ten years ago, they had already rebelled once! That was nothing, but this time, they have blatantly violated the Empire's decree by forming an alliance and electing a Tribal Chief without permission. Hmph! It seems that their leader is a very brave and ambitious person!"

Xier's Governor-General gritted his teeth in hatred and said, "Bastard! According to the decree of the Empire, the tribes are not to elect a tribal chief, and the tribes must honor His Majesty as the Tribal Chief! They dared to do this, are they not afraid of being executed? I... I will immediately report to the Imperial Capital!"

Camus looked at him with disdain and simply said, "This incident had already happened. The news that I received had not changed and it was delayed by ten days. Right now, the most important thing to do is to restrain the soldiers and make preparations. If I am not wrong, they will raise their flags in less than a month! The situation in the South is complicated as many of the defenders are also mountain people. This is why it is more important to stabilize the troops now! The two of you, Governors-General, please rush back to your respective provinces! I will immediately dispatch the Southern Legion to give assistance!"

Camus paused for a while and slowly said, "Right now, the problem is like a raging flame. With a small spark, the cities will start to burn! Currently, the Purple Leaf City has thirty thousand defenders. Among them, ten thousand are mountain people.

Governor-General, please send someone to keep a close watch on them. Also, give the order for them to shut down the barracks and make sure that they do not contact anyone from outside!"

Xier's Governor-General was trembling nonstop and said, "Could it be that these guys are going to turn renegade? I... I will immediately mobilize the garrison and immediately arrest them all!"

Idiot! Camus scolded in his heart. Arrest? They have ten thousand infantries and are well equipped. How are you going to arrest them? Your twenty thousand undisciplined defenders would easily be routed by the ferocious mountain people, in just two encounters!

Rody thought for a moment and then he slowly spoke, "Governor-General, in my opinion, we should not hastily arrest them right now! Now that the mountain tribes have formed an alliance, the first thing they will do is to contact the mountain soldiers in the southeast! These soldiers may be affiliated to the Empire but ultimately, they are still foreigners. If someone incited a rebellion, there will definitely be some of them who will follow! However, if we suddenly arrest them first, those who did not plan to revolt will also be forced to revolt!"

Xier's Governor-General immediately laughed and said, "Yes, yes! Your Excellency the Duke is right! In this case, what do you suggest?"

Rody secretly frowned and said, "Just follow Camus' idea and give an order to shut down the barracks! Nobody is allowed to enter or leave without permission! Nobody is allowed to get in contact with anyone from the outside! After that, mobilize the army as a deterrence!" Having said that, he looked at Camus and asked, "Your Excellency Camus, how many soldiers can you take out from the Southern Legion?"

Camus showed a complicated expression as he looked at Rody. He

thought deeply for a moment and then he replied. “Fifty thousand is the maximum! I can’t take out any more soldiers! I need to retain enough troops for the Southeast. This is because when the mountain tribes finally start their rebellion, the Southeast Legion would be at the frontlines to put down the rebellion!”

Rody nodded his head and said, “I heard before arriving in the city that there are two large infantry units in the Xier Province. One of them is stationed in the Purple Leaf City. The other one is divided into five units, with one thousand soldiers each, and were stationed at various regions in Xier Province. Am I right?”

“Yes.” Xier’s Governor General immediately nodded his head. He then bowed and said, “Your Excellency the Duke is clear in understanding the minute details!”

Rody calmly nodded his head and thought in his heart. I originally came to the South to do my job. If I had not gathered any information in advance, I will just end up being fooled by all of you, corrupted officials.

He then looked at the other two Governors-General. The other two immediately noticed him and replied, “I have four thousand mountain army in my garrison.”

“I have five thousand people at my place but they are all reserve army.”

Rody secretly sighed and could not help but cursed in his heart. These useless garrisons! They knew that the mountain barbarians are ready to create trouble and yet they still dared to recruit so many mountain people as their defenders! It is obvious that if these mountain people want to revolt, they may even provide weapons to the enemy! They are really extremely stupid!

Rody did not know that there had been no wars in the South for ten years and the military discipline had become lax. The officers were corrupted but were not overboard because of Camus’ presence. As a result, they could only skimp as much as possible by

hiring the mountain people. The military salary of the mountain people was much lower than the soldiers of the Empire. There were a lot of cases like this. In order to fill their pockets, the military officers did not care that much. They had always thought that the mountain people had already surrendered for so many years and would no longer revolt. There were even those that yelled the nonsensical slogan, 'Utilize barbaric methods to rule the barbarians'. They did not know that that method was feasible only if it was applied under an extremely strong central leadership. That was because there was a strong army that could be used as a backup as deterrence. That must also be supplemented with appeasing methods to support it.

However, the current strength of the Empire was weak and the defenders were scattered. The swords in their hands were blunt and yet they still shouted the slogan of "utilize barbaric methods to rule barbarians". Moreover, they took the initiative of giving swords to the enemy. Naturally, the enemy would use the swords against them when the need arise.

According to Rody's rough calculation, in the three Southeast provinces, the local garrisons had about one hundred thousand defenders, out of which thirty thousand were mountain people. The ratio of population was also about at this level. However, when Rody thought of false military reports and embezzlement, his calculations might not be accurate.

Rody did not want to bother that much. Speaking as a Duke he requested the other two Governors-General to leave Purple Leaf City and return to their respective provinces.

Camus had brought ten thousand of the Southern Legion's cavalry when he was on the way to the city. and the cavalry was waiting outside the city. At his own discretion, he had earlier already dispatched twenty thousand soldiers to the other two provinces in the Southeast to assist the local Governors-General.

After Camus had briefed them, he immediately left the city.

When he left, he casually nodded his head to Rody but he did not look at Xier's Governor-General at all.

After Camus was gone, Xier's Governor-General felt unhappy. He coldly snorted and said, "This Camus! He did not show any respect for Your Excellency the Duke, at all!"

Rody calmly smiled and thought to himself, Camus not showing respect for me is a small matter. I think you are angry because he did not show respect for you. Rody calmly spoke, "The current situation is urgent. His Excellency Camus is busy with important matters."

Xier's Governor-General tried to flatter Rody, so he just laughed awkwardly.

That afternoon, an order was passed from the Governor-General's mansion. The Purple Leaf City was taking strict precautions.

Rody took Randt with him and quietly looked around the streets. He saw the local defenders running around the Purple Leaf City in a disorderly manner. Besides that, many of the local defenders took the opportunity to blackmail the merchants and extort money. When Rody saw this, he secretly gritted his teeth. This kind of army does not even need to wait for the mountain tribes to start a rebellion. As long as there is a mutiny from the mountain defenders, the Purple Leaf City will immediately be lost!

Rody looked at the huge city walls that were like a fortress and sighed in his heart as he thought. What is the use of tall city walls? With lousy personnel, the walls are just decoration! Looking at the behavior and actions of the three Governors-General and the other noble officers, saying that they can properly manage the place is a joke! If it was not for Camus watching over the Southeast, half of the money used to construct the walls would have entered the pockets of the corrupted officers. It is similar to Watt Fortress. A wall that is supposed to be twelve meters tall is actually less than

ten meters...

Chapter 107: Mutiny

In the evening, Rody sternly rejected a dinner banquet with the Xier's Governor-General. Instead, he ate in the government office. Xier's Governor-General had initially prepared a large house for Rody to stay in before he arrived in the city. However, Rody was not interested in staying in the big house when he saw the current situation. Instead, he insisted on staying at the backyard of the government office.

The government office had a front yard and a backyard. The front yard was where all the local officials handled the government affairs. The backyard was the residence of the Governor-General. However, the Governor-General disliked the backyard as it looked extremely miserable. The Governor-General rarely lived there. It was said that the Governor-General had another mansion in the Purple Leaf City. However, Rody felt that the residence was peaceful and quiet.

In the middle of the night, Rody suddenly heard a racket of noisy footsteps and woke up. He ran out immediately. He then saw Randt already rushing towards him. Randt said, "Your Excellency the Duke! The mountain people at the barracks have all started a mutiny! They have already detained their Regiment Commander. Right now, His Excellency Camus and his army have surrounded the barracks and is currently confronting them! The other defenders of the Purple Leaf City have already gathered outside!"

Rody frowned and immediately wore his uniform. He took ten of his guards with him and rode the horses out of the city.

Along the way, Rody could not help but frown when he saw the soldiers of the Purple Leaf City in big and small groups, running around in disorder. Randt was a straightforward person. When he saw the disorderly local soldiers, he whispered to Rody. "How do the military officers lead their soldiers? How do they go to war with these soldiers? If an enemy were to launch a surprise attack,

they will collapse immediately.”

Rody shook his head and sighed. If it was not for Camus’ warning, it would have already been a disaster.

When he arrived at the city gates, he saw that the gates were closed. Many of the defenders, regardless whether they were common soldiers or officers, were seized with terror on the walls. Rody frowned. He sent one of his subordinates to question them, and then he found out the truth.

The information that Randt obtained earlier was wrong. The fact that there was a mutiny at the barracks was true, but the barracks were not surrounded. The place that was surrounded was the city gates. Camus and the Southern Legion were confronting them at the gates. Those mountain soldiers had kidnapped an officer of the Empire. They then gathered at the gates, fully equipped, and made a fuss about wanting to meet with the Governor-General.

Rody took Randt up the walls and along the way, the defenders could be heard saying that His Excellency the Duke had arrived. Hurriedly, the soldiers moved out of the way while the smart ones immediately looked for their commanding officer so that they could report that to them.

Rody stood on the walls and looked down.

Rody saw about ten thousand infantry wearing the uniform of the Empire’s local garrison. They formed a phalanx and were armed with weapons as they gathered murderously outside the city. Behind them, there were a large number of soldiers wearing the uniform of the Southern Legion. The Southern Legion soldiers encircled the garrison soldiers.

Both sides had already drawn their weapons. With one wrong word, they would end up fighting each other. The forest was on fire and the night was as bright as day.

Although the mountain people were wearing the Empire’s

uniform, they were easy to differentiate from the people of the Empire. The mountain people were taller than the people of the Empire. They had dark skin. Their noses were flatter and their eyes were more brown.

The mutineers' formations were neat and orderly. With a glance, it could be seen that these people were regularly trained and were very different from the other garrison soldiers of the Empire who were disorderly.

At that moment, an officer was arguing with one of Camus' soldiers at the top of his voice. The others were silent as they glared in anger.

That officer who was shouting was wearing the uniform of a commander. At a glance, he was a mountain soldier. It was not known as to what that man had said to the Southern Legion.

Without saying much, he waved his hands and two mountain soldiers immediately dragged out a man. The man had his arms tied behind his back and a rope looped around his neck.

The clothing of the person was disarrayed. Although he was wearing the uniform of the Empire, he had a dispirited and terrified expression.

The mountain officer shouted in a language that Rody could not understand. Rody did not know what he said, but the other mountain soldiers burst out in an earth-shattering cry.

Rody frowned. He grabbed an officer beside him and whispered, "What did they say? Why are they shouting?"

That officer was frightened and stammered, "Your, Your, Your Excellency... they said that if we do not agree with their request, they will immediately kill Toohey and then fight us till the end of life..."

"Toohey? Is he the Regiment Commander for the mountain soldiers?" Rody frowned and let go of the officer.

He looked back at the mountain soldiers below. They were getting more and more emotional. Their torches revealed their angry expressions. Their swords flashed under the light, and some of them had already aimed their bows at the calvary of the Southern Legion.

Rody looked at a spot with torches and saw a person astride a black horse near the Southern Legion. Camus was wearing a full set of armor. He squinted his eyes and gave off a murderous aura. He lowered his head from his horse and said something to an officer beside him. After that, the officer obeyed and immediately shouted, "Soldiers that are causing disorder! Listen well! His Excellency Camus have given you all the chance to lay down your arms and return to the barracks within two hours. Otherwise, it will be considered as the violation of military orders and offenders will be killed on the spot." The officer shouted in the Empire's language and repeated in the common language of the mountain people.

His words caused an uproar with the mountain soldiers. Camus' subordinates did not care. They raised their lance and shouted, "Soldiers! The command! Line up!"

All the cavalrymen raised their lances as they pointed them at the mountain soldiers.

"Advance!" That officer shouted loudly.

The cavalry formation started to take one step forward. Its oppressive momentum could be felt by everyone. The clamoring mountain soldiers also started to quiet down. They gritted their teeth as they looked at the dark mass of cavalry in front and the long lances in their hands that, together, looked like a forest of trees.

The leader of the mountain soldiers was not an idiot. He knew that it would be difficult to defend a cavalry charge in an open terrain. On top of that, the opponent was Camus' elite cavalry.

He showed a distressed expression and shouted, “Your Excellency Camus! We have always respected you! Do you really want to kill us mountain people?”

The shout was unyielding and filled with resentment. That officer glared at Camus, and his eyes were filled with rage.

He then heard Camus said, “You are all soldiers of the Empire! Naturally, I do not want to kill you! As long as you put down your weapons and return to the barracks, I will take responsibility for you!” Everyone had heard those words clearly.

That officer hesitated. Camus had prestige in the Southeast and had always kept his words. He was generally revered by everyone. However, the officer also knew that Camus was usually firm. If Camus had decided to kill, he would give the order and would definitely not spare anyone. If that officer acted recklessly, he and his companions would definitely be dead.

While he was hesitating, another mountain soldier loudly shouted, “What nonsense! The people of the Empire only knows how to oppress us! Let us fight them!”

These words came from within the mountain soldiers. That person was hidden in the crowd and could not be found. Those words were like pouring oil on fire. Almost immediately, many of the agitated soldiers immediately shouted, “Fight! Fight!”

The hearts of Camus and Rody started to feel heavy. Rody felt a sense of dread as if someone had just deliberately provoked the mountain soldiers. The mountain tribes had probably already infiltrated the barracks.

Helplessly looking at his excited subordinates, the leader of the mountain soldiers could only grit his teeth and loudly said, “Your Excellency Camus! It is not that we do not believe you! This Toohey always oppressed us too much! We have not received our salary for two months already! Just the day before yesterday, a few of our companions went to reason out with him but they were

beaten to death! We cannot take this kind of treatment! Toohey is the Governor-General's nephew! If we let him go today, we will be dead tomorrow!"

"That's right! We cannot let him go free!"

"Cannot let him go!"

Countless voices shouted out and caused a commotion.

Camus looked gloomy. He took a deep breath and loudly shouted, "I have already heard about Toohey. Release him and I will handle this! I, Camus, have been in the South for over ten years. Have I ever lied to you before?"

This loud declaration caused everyone to shut up and start to relax. They all knew that Camus was strict but was also fair and true to his words. Now that Camus had made a promise, he would not go back against his words.

There was a moment of silence before that voice uttered another sentence, "Do not be fooled! The people of the Empire are cunning! Let us fight..."

Before he could finish speaking, Camus suddenly roared loudly, "Who is that trying to be sneaky? If you have the courage, come out and talk to me directly!"

Camus sudden voice was loud like thunder and interrupted that person.

Camus gazed around and said, "Come out and talk to me! Tonight, you, mountain people, were brave enough to kidnap a commanding officer! This is a crime punishable by death! However, you do not dare to come out and talk to me?"

The mountain soldiers who heard that shouted as well, "Go out and speak with him directly! What is that to be scared of? The mountain people are not cowards!"

Everybody's eyes focused on one person as the mountain soldiers

slowly moved away to reveal that person. That man was wearing the Empire's uniform and was standing in the middle. His face showed a strange expression.

That man looked like he was about thirty years old and had a dark complexion. His eyes showed confusion and fear.

Camus snorted coldly and asked, "Didn't you have something to say? First state your military rank!"

The person stammered and could not give a reply.

The leader of the mountain soldiers was also puzzled and frowned, "What camp are you from? Just answer His Excellency's questions! Do not be afraid! Do not sully our mountain people's name!"

The man looked around and said with a red face, "I... I am from the second camp..."

"Nonsense!" Camus interrupted him and said, "Where is your commanding officer? Ask him to come forward!"

As soon as Camus finished his words, a majestic mountain soldier came out and looked at the man before loudly saying, "Your Excellency, Camus! He is not one of my men! He is one of our companion's family member."

"Hmph!" Camus gave a cold smile. "He is not a soldier, so how did he enter the barracks? He even dares to wear the military uniform and carry weapons! This is a capital offense! The disturbance you had caused tonight must have been led by him!"

With those words, the other soldiers beside him gave a strange expression as they looked at the spy. That night, it was this man who had incited everyone to fight with Toohey's subordinates. When this got out of hand, Toohey came to suppress. He then caused a bigger fuss and attracted many mountain soldiers. Finally, under the pressure of the recent oppression they were facing, a mutiny was incited.

That night, they rushed to the city gate demanding to see the Governor-General. During the chaos, he had also put on a uniform and followed them. However, nobody was too concerned about him.

Camus narrowed his eyes and spoke coldly, "Infiltrating the army and deceiving others! Arrest him!"

Two of his cavalrymen acknowledged and immediately dismounted. They strode towards the mountain soldiers.

That person's eyes shifted, and he screamed, "I am a mountain person! Do you want to kill all of us?"

Those words immediately caused a commotion. A few of the mountain soldiers who were standing at the outer areas of the crowd immediately took out their swords and brandished at the two cavalrymen. They prevented the cavalrymen from getting closer.

The man continued to shout, "The Empire have oppressed us excessively! Are the people of the mountains going to let them take advantage of us forever? Kill them! Rebel! Rebel!"

Those words reminded the mountain soldiers of the oppression and humiliation they received and more soldiers started to make an uproar.

The original leader of the mountain soldiers was still rational but his companions had already started to make an uproar. He sighed and his face gradually sank. Although he was with the group that caused trouble, he only wanted justice and did not really want to rebel. However, when he looked at the current situation, he knew that this was not something that he could control.

The mountain people were, after all, foreigners. They were doughty simpletons. Coupled with the chaotic situation that night, half of the soldiers had lost their calm and started to cause trouble. Although the other half of the soldiers were still clear-headed, but

with the yelling of their companions, they gradually lost their calm.

Rody looked at that from afar and felt anxious. Gritting his teeth, he looked at Randt and said in a low voice, “Not good! Order all the soldiers on the walls to get ready! Archers, get ready!”

Randt resolutely went down and transmitted the orders. He was the attendant of the Duke. Although the soldiers on the wall were still panicking, they reluctantly lined up and prepared themselves.

Rody looked at the disorderly soldiers and shook his head. He thought that if they were to totally rely on those soldiers and without the support of Camus, the city would be lost that night.

In this sudden mutiny, even though the soldiers had already closed the city gates, they had not raised the drawbridge over the city moat. If the mountain soldiers were to really break out fighting, there would be a siege. It was going to be really dangerous without the support of Camus’ soldiers from outside the city.

“We need to think of a way to get rid of that spy.” Unfortunately, the instigator was very cunning. He stayed within the protective military array of the mountain soldiers and would absolutely not move a single step out of it. Rody started to calculate in his mind the distance between him and that person. Rody wondered if he could kill that person with just one shot of the arrow.

Just as Rody was thinking, suddenly a sound of the air being pierced could be heard. After that, there was a miserable scream as the spy’s forehead was struck by an arrow. He fell down with his head looking at the sky. Bright red blood, mixed with white brain discharge, was flowing out on the floor. The other mountain soldiers were frightened and they backed away.

Rody was also shocked at the sudden development and immediately looked at the top of the gates. He saw a figure on top of the roof. The figure’s clothes fluttered in the night breeze. He held a strange longbow in his hands. From afar, the figure nodded

at Rody before turning around. He then jumped off the roof and disappeared into the night.

“Dark!” Rody could not help but shout. He had not expected Dark to follow him. Dark had kept his promise not to assassinate him, but Rody did not expect Dark to help out.

Seeing that trouble was about to start below the city walls, Rody did not bother to think about other things. He turned his attention back to the two groups below the city walls.

Camus was also surprised but before he could react, the mountain soldiers started to shout. One of them shouted out, “The people of the Empire have begun to kill!”

“They started to kill! Fight back! Fight back!”

“Rebel!”

In the state of chaos, the mountain soldiers took out their swords and rushed towards Camus' cavalry.

“Stop!” Rody suddenly shouted loudly from the top of the city gates. At that crucial moment, he used his fighting energy. He stood on the very edge of the brick of the walls. He was so loud that everybody could clearly hear him even though the crowd was noisy. His voice was like a hammer pounding on their hearts. Everyone was startled and could not help but looked up at the city walls.

With only the light from the torches around him, Rody fearlessly stood on the walls. A pale golden flame could be seen around his body. His golden hair fluttered in the wind as he gazed across the crowd. The arrogance of his body was like a bewitching flame, making Rody look like the Killer God in the night.

Rody roared, “People below the city walls! Listen! I am the Empire’s Duke of Tulip Family! I am the Special Envoy for the Southeast, sent by His Majesty the Emperor! The mutiny you have incited tonight is a crime, punishable by death! I and Camus want

to be lenient and give you a chance. But you are all still gathered here! Do you really want to start a rebellion? Have you all considered the consequences of rebelling? Most of your family are in the city! Don't you know that the entire family of the rebels would be executed according to the law?"

In the silence, Rody's words spread throughout the crowd. Everyone was startled after listening to what he said. Those noisy mountain people immediately calmed down.

The mountain people and the mountain tribes were slightly different. The mountain people had lived in the city and had been under the rule of the Empire for many years. Most of their families also lived in the city. They already had different lifestyles compared to those that lived in the remote mountains. As a result, their hearts felt heavy when they heard those words.

Rody purposely paused for a moment before he loudly shouted again, "You all gathered here and caused trouble, to seek justice? Fine! I will give you justice!" After that, Rody grabbed a bow and arrow from a soldier, next to him. He gave a cold groan as he pulled the bowstring.

They then heard the sound of the arrow flying. The arrow was wrapped in a faint golden flame as it flew down the walls. The sound of the void had the same momentum as the thunder.

After that, there was a piercing sound. Everyone cried out in alarm as the tied up Toohey gave a blood-curdling scream. The arrow wrapped in golden flame struck him and his chest exploded. Flesh and blood flew in every direction, and the man died a very gruesome death.

Everyone was shocked by what had just happened. Even Camus did not expect Rody to do such a thing.

Rody put down the bow and coldly looked at the mountain soldiers below the city walls. He saw that they were all in disbelief. Rody gave a wry smile and loudly said, "I have given you your

justice! Now I will count to ten! In this time, I want everyone to drop your weapons, line up and head back to the barracks! If not, that person will be considered a rebel, and his whole family will be executed!”

Everyone looked at one another. The leader of the mountain soldiers then pushed aside the crowd, stepped forward and knelt down. He then bowed his head and said, “Thank you, Your Excellency the Duke for bringing justice to us! However, word of this incident has already spread! Kidnapping a commanding officer is also punishable by death! We do not mind leaving on condition that Your Excellency can guarantee not to pursue this incident! Otherwise, everyone will also die.” Speaking up to that point, the man stood up and silently looked at Rody.

Rody snorted coldly and loudly said, “Military law of the Empire states that you are all guilty and should be executed! However, I will give you all two choices! Your first choice is to drop your weapons and return to your barracks! I will only look for the leader in this incident, and I will spare the rest! Your second choice will be to pick up your weapons and fight to your heart’s content! However, once you have rebelled, I will order the soldiers in the city to execute all of your family members without sparing a single life!”

‘Without sparing a single life.’ Those words rang in the hearts of the mountain soldiers. They thought of their family members in the city and immediately became soft-hearted.

Rody did not hesitate and started to count. “One!”

The mountain soldiers below the city walls looked at one another.

“Two!”

The mountain soldiers looked at their leader. Their leader was sweating and his facial expression was gloomy.

“Three!” Rody continued to shout coldly without hesitating.

“Archers, get ready!” Randt shouted. A row of soldiers immediately stood on top of the walls. Each of them held a bow and arrow in their hands and aimed towards the city walls below.

“Four!” Rody’s cold voice came again.

“Your Excellency the Duke!” The officer shouted, “Don't go back on your words! If everybody were to go back, you will spare them. You will only punish the leader!”

Rody coldly replied, “If you can trust General Camus, do you think I, the Duke of Tulip Family, will lie to you?”

The officer was shocked and remembered the Duke’s fame. He then gritted his teeth and took a deep breath before shouting, “Everybody put down your weapons!”

Rody nodded his head and no longer continued counting.

The mountain soldiers looked at one another until, finally, the sound of the first weapon dropping on to the floor was heard. When the first person had dropped his weapon, the others immediately followed and dropped their weapons.

The clattering sound went uninterrupted. A few of the unyielding and tough soldiers also dropped their weapons when they saw the others gave up and that the situation was hopeless.

Chapter 108: Negotiation

Seeing that the rebels have laid down their weapons, their leader gave them the order to line up. Following Camus' orders, the Southern Legion dismounted, surrounded the mountain soldiers and led them to the barracks. Two rows of cavalymen followed them from both sides. They were heavily armed and gave off the impression that they were ready to fight.

Rody looked at the defenseless rebels below the city walls and for some unknown reason, suddenly had a fearsome thought.

Now that they have dropped their weapons, let's execute them all to prevent any potential problems occurring in the future!"

The thought was so sudden that Rody himself was shocked and started to have cold sweat.

Shit. Why did I suddenly have these kinds of thoughts? Rody cursed in his mind. Andy took no heed and spoke in his mind. "Why do you care? Right now, the rebellion of the mountain tribes is imminent. With the presence of the mountain soldiers, the other soldiers would not be able to relax. Once the mountain tribes openly rebel, these Empire's mountain soldiers would become extremely dangerous. Whether they will rebel or not is anybody's guess. Perhaps, it is better to take advantage of the fact that they are unarmed at this moment and kill them all!"

"Nonsense!" Rody frowned. "How can I indiscriminately kill innocent people?"

Rody then heard Andy laugh. "What's wrong? Why are you so agitated? I did not give you this idea. You thought it up yourself! Hehe, let me tell you. The late Duke would have done this. He is someone who would take preventive measures! As you know, [the success of a general is built on the bones of ten thousand soldiers](#). Let us say they refuse to surrender. What would you have done? Would you really execute their family? Didn't you say that you

would not spare a single life? Hehe, just now you said it so resolutely but now you are being soft-hearted.”

Listening to Andy’s words, Rody just gritted his teeth and did not reply. He could not help but think. What will I do if they did not surrender? Will I kill their family members? According to the Imperial decree, they must be executed but... but... will I kill them?

Suddenly his heart stirred as he felt a sharp glare directed at him. Rody looked back and saw Camus looking at him from below the city walls. Camus squinted his eyes and showed a profound gaze. A ruthless smile present on his lips. When Camus saw that Rody made eye contact with him, he gently signaled at the mountain soldiers who were returning to the barracks. Camus’ eyes had a questioning look.

Rody was very disturbed. He understood Camus’ intentions and the meaning behind the look Camus gave him. Camus had asked himself a similar question.

To kill or not to kill?

Rody took a deep breath and inhaled the cold air of the night. He forced himself to calm down and then he looked at Camus and shook his head.

Camus gave a wry smile and gently whipped his horse. Together with his subordinates, he escorted the mountain soldiers back to the barracks.

Rody was confused. After a short while, he saw that both parties had completely departed and they only left behind two corpses in their pools of blood.

“Let’s go back!” Rody said softly. “Let us go back to the Governor-General’s office. Dispatch someone to tell the Governor-General to come and see me.”

During that entire incident, the Xier's Governor-General did not

show up at all. Rody was calm but angry. He wanted to fault that Governor-General. He is one of the highest ranked officers. How could he just hide in fear?

Rody and his subordinates had just reached the entrance of the Governor-General's office when he saw a carriage protected by bodyguards heading towards the office. Rody could recognize that it was that Governor-General's carriage and immediately felt gloomy.

Sure enough, the Xier's Governor-General got down from the carriage the moment it stopped. He then approached Rody and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, I heard you are looking for me and I immediately rushed over..."

Rody was angry when he saw him and did not dismount from his horse. He spoke coldly, "Have you received the news? Your nephew Toohey had embezzled the soldiers' wages and had slaughtered them indiscriminately. He had caused the mutiny and was executed by me."

The Governor-General was startled. He immediately lifted his head to look at Rody. His expression changed. A trace of anguish could be seen on his face as he hung his head and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, Toohey's mistakes had caused the mutiny and he deserved the punishment."

Rody snorted and said, "You are actually very understanding." He then paused for a moment before coldly continuing, "Just now a disaster almost started outside the city gates. Where were you during that time? As the Governor-General, could it be that you were still sleeping at home?"

The Governor-General started to have cold sweat. He did not lift his head as he softly said, "I... I received the news late... this... so..."

Rody felt furious and wanted to denounce him loudly. However, he had to suppress his anger and warned himself. This is someone

else's land. I only have a few guards with me. I do not have any soldiers or power. The situation here is too complicated. Even though this person is a hateful person, he is still the Governor-General. If I were to suddenly become hostile to him, the stability of the province will be threatened.

Taking a deep breath, Rody replied, "Governor-General, it is fortunate that tonight's incident did not end up as a big problem. You better restrain your soldiers and have them carefully watch the city gates. Take essential precautions. Right now, both of us are in the same boat. If the Southeast is stable, then both of us would have no worries. Otherwise, we would be in trouble." He then paused and continued softly, "Do you know Reuben from the Northwest? He had the title of Earl but because of his failure, his title was stripped. Besides that, he was also locked up in the martial court. Governor-General, do you have as much power and influence as Reuben? That will be all for tonight. Right now, Camus is making sure that the mutinying soldiers return to their barracks. I suggest that the Governor-General can allocate some soldiers to speed up preparations and provide support.

After finishing what he had to say and without looking at the Governor-General, Rody entered the government building. He left the Governor-General standing at the same spot.

The moment Rody entered the building, he immediately called for Randt and whispered: "Take additional precautions. Tonight, we killed the Governor-General's nephew. Although the Governor-General did not have a fall out with me, after all, we are now in his territory. In another two days, when the Wolf Fang arrives, we would not need to worry anymore!"

Randt left after receiving his orders. Rody felt physically and mentally exhausted. When he thought of what happened that night, he was confused. He shook his head and went back to his room.

Rody was agitated. When he remembered the thoughts he had

earlier, he felt afraid. When did I become so bloodthirsty? Is it true that people will change after they have killed a lot?

He then heard Andy laugh, “Kid, You do not need to feel strange about it. After all, you have been the Duke for quite some time. These kinds of thoughts are normal as most leaders are usually cruel and ruthless. You were not wrong to have those thoughts.”

Rody helplessly asked, “Do you think those thoughts are normal? Don’t you think that it is too cruel?”

Andy’s voice was full of disdain as he replied, “Cruel? I am different from you. I am not a human. I am just a skeleton. I do not care about how many people are killed. With you as an exception, I would not bat an eye even if everyone in the world is killed.”

Rody shook his head as he disagreed with Andy’s words. However, he was unable to tell which parts of Andy’s words were wrong. Feeling drowsy, Rody finally fell asleep.

At dawn, Rody heard the faint sound of people talking outside the door. After that, the door was gently opened. Light footsteps accompanied by the crisp ringing of bells drifted in.

Rody sat up from his bed and saw the woman dressed in red from yesterday’s banquet entering the room. She held a silver pot in her hand and looked flushed as she walked to his side. She was still wearing the small, short red dress, exposing her four limbs and small waistline. Her foot had an anklet with small bells. The bells gave crisp jingles with every step she made.

Rody frowned. “How did you come in?”

The woman hung her head and said softly. “Your Excellency the Duke, the Governor-General is the one who sent me here to serve you.”

Rody was startled and then he gave a wry smile. “The Governor-General is really considerate in that area.”

That woman smiled. Although her face still looked flushed, she

boldly looked at Rody and whispered, “The Governor-General has good intentions. Although you already have people to serve you, but they are all rough men. You will need women for some other matters because we women are naturally more attentive.”

After that, she handed Rody a wet towel. He could not get angry at her, but instead, he sighed and then accepted the towel from her.

Suddenly, Randt pushed open the door and walked in as he said in a muffled voice, "Your Excellency the Duke, General Camus is here to see you. He is waiting for you in the front hall."

Rody immediately removed the towel. Rody rushed out with Randt, without sparing a glance at the woman and so, had missed the change in her expression.

Camus still had a cold expression. He only nodded when he saw Rody walk into the front hall. Rody saw that Camus looked quite haggard. Apparently, Camus did not sleep the previous night. Although Camus did not have a pleasant attitude towards him, Rody knew that Camus, the Commander of the Southern Legion, was the only one that could help him in the Southeast.

“General Camus. You are very early.” Rody smiled.

Camus coldly replied. “This is only natural. Did Your Excellency the Duke sleep well?”

Rody replied, “General must be blaming me for being lazy... However, I do not have a single soldier with me. I am only a phony special envoy, so I can only sleep at home.

Camus gave a sarcastic laugh and said, “Just a phony special envoy? Your Excellency's actions last night showed a lot of power and wisdom. With one command, you managed to get the soldiers to surrender. It looks like His Majesty was not wrong in dispatching you here.”

Rody sighed and said, “General Camus, I know you have some

grudges with my family. But the late... my father had already passed away. Please forget all your feelings of resentment. This time, I have come to the South and I would need a lot of your help.”

Camus’ expression changed and he lightly said, “What resentment? You are the Duke and His Majesty’s special envoy. I am just the Commander-in-Chief of the local army in the Southeast. If you have any instructions, just say it and nobody would dare to defy you.”

Rody just shook his head as he knew that years of grudges cannot be solved within a short period of time. He reluctantly smiled and continued. “What is the condition at the barracks outside the city?”

“The mountain soldiers have been paid and are now in the barracks. I have already stationed some soldiers to secure the barracks.” After saying that, Camus showed an anxious expression as he continued, “These soldiers are only temporarily stable. When news of the combined tribal rebellion is out, I am afraid...” After that, Camus’ eyes showed a murderous glint.

Rody nodded and said, “Someone had secretly provoked them to mutiny last night. However, we do not know any of the current news about the mountain tribes.”

Camus sighed, “I came here to talk to you about this matter.”

“Alright.” Rody said as he laughed, “In that case, I will call the Governor-General over to discuss this together with us.”

“The Governor-General? That good-for-nothing,” Camus sneered. He then looked at Rody and said, “Seth. Let us speak the truth. An old man like me is too lazy to talk in circles. The Governor-General here is just a good-for-nothing! If not for the two of us, I am afraid we would have lost Purple Leaf City before dawn due to last night’s incident! What is the purpose of discussing things with that useless person?”

Rody felt awkward and somehow managed to laugh without speaking.

Camus waved his hand in disapproval. “Although I do not like your Tulip Family, I am not stupid and also not devoid of sense. The current situation is complicated. I have also seen that your actions are not much different compared to your late father. Hehe... The mountain people wants to rebel? They better ask if my sword will approve of it or not!”

Rody nodded and said, “Alright. In that case, why did General Camus come and visit me so early in the morning?”

Camus walked forward two steps and whispered, “The Flame Tribe has dispatched someone to see me. They said they intend to negotiate with us.”

“Negotiations?” Rody opened his eyes wide as he said, “They have already gathered the chiefs together and would probably start their rebellion in the next few days! What do they want to negotiate at this time?”

Camus suddenly smiled and said something that surprised Rody.

“Your Excellency the Duke, you must have missed the news. I received news this morning that Wuya of the Flame Tribe, their newly elected Chief, was attacked by an assassin. He was attacked the day before yesterday and is now seriously injured. His chance for survival is uncertain.”

一将成名万骨枯, yī jiāng chéngmíng wàn gǔkū. The original line 一将功成万骨枯, yī jiāng gōng chéng wàn gǔkū , is a Tang Dynasty poem which says that a general's success is built on the sacrifice of 10,000 soldiers. The minor variation 成名 (fame) and 功成 (success) does not alter the meaning.

Chapter 109: Peaceful South Plan

“What!” Rody jumped from his chair.

Camus also laughed and said, “Isn’t it hard to believe? I was also surprised but the information is reliable. It looks like God is protecting the Empire.”

Rody thought carefully and asked, “Even if that Wuya is seriously injured, why would they immediately admit defeat and ask for peace?”

Camus sighed. "Speaking of which, I really admire Wuya. This person is strong, unyielding, smart and cunning. Normally, the mountain people are all simple people. However, Wuya, at the age of twenty had already become the head of the Flame Tribe. He then used some unknown ways and made the Flame Tribe more prosperous. After that, he conquered the neighboring tribes and the Flame Tribe became the most influential tribe in the mountains. I heard that in the coalition of the nineteen tribes, there were many that opposed him. However, he somehow managed to force them all to submit to him. The people of the mountains are simpletons by nature. They are brave and ruthless. They will not serve others so easily. However, all nineteen tribes have now submitted to him. I am worried that if he is allowed to develop and combine the strength of all the other tribes, he would become another Reuenthal in less than three years. If that happens, another large kingdom would be founded in the mountains!"

Rody could not help but asked, “Is this Wuya really so formidable?”

Camus gave a wry smile as he replied, “He is certainly a formidable person. However, for some reason, he was attacked by an assassin and almost died. Although the mountain tribes are united under his rule, the barbarians are still unable to break away

from their ruthless nature. Wuya is unable to manage the Flame Tribe because of his injuries. The other tribes started to fight amongst themselves and called for the reelection of a new chief. Hehe. Wuya is injured and cannot battle with us. Now he can only temporarily give in and negotiate with us.

Rody thought for a moment before asking, "In this case, do we really negotiate with him? Isn't it better to send troops into the mountains to surround and suppress them? We would stabilize the situation in one fell swoop!"

Camus shook his head and smiled coldly. "Seth, you think too simply! If it is possible to go into the mountains to surround them, I would have done so years ago! The mountain is large and if we cannot find the enemy, we would only end up walking in circles! The mountain people have lived there for hundreds of years and the mountains are their territory! Ten years ago, there was a rebellion in Xier. After I quelled the rebellion, I led troops into the mountains hoping to destroy them in one swoop. In the end, laugh if you must, I almost lost my life in the mountains!"

"Oh?" Rody showed an expression of disbelief. He did not expect the arrogant Camus to acknowledge his own failure.

Camus coldly looked at Rody and continued, "There are many paths in the mountains and the paths are narrow and winding. It is difficult to travel using those paths as only one person could pass through at a time. Besides the paths is the bottomless abyss. Some of these places are filled with lush forests. In the humid weather, there are a lot of poisonous insects! There is also the poisonous miasma in the evening which can be fatal! The mountain people are familiar with the terrain and will not fight outright with you. They will hide in the mountains and wait for you to tire out. Then, they will ambush you repeatedly before retreating into hiding again."

Rody looked imposing as he thought to himself. He then asked, "So, General Camus, are you suggesting that we negotiate with

them? What are the conditions set by them?"

Camus slowly said, "They want the Empire to recognize the status of the mountain's Tribal Chief. The mountain people are willing to declare itself a vassal of the Empire. However, the mountains will be the territory of the mountain people!"

"Impossible!" Rody immediately shook his head, "How can we decide such things? Even if we were to agree, His Majesty the Emperor would not agree! On top of that, we are merely Commanders-in-Chief of the Southern Region. We do not have the right to decide such things."

Camus' expression did not change and he lightly said, "I obviously know that. This is why we should just oblige and pretend to negotiate with them. Wuya was stabbed probably because the other mountain tribes are dissatisfied with him. There is also disunity among them. We could sow internal discord. I heard that Wuya is on the verge of death. The mountain people are more concerned about physical strength. Although Wuya is smart, he is now unable to fight those who go against him. We just need to take this opportunity to provoke and create disorder among them. The worst that could happen is that the tribes will merge and elect a new chief. As long as the chief is not Wuya, they would pose no threat! A bunch of barbarians who only know how to shoot arrows will never be a threat! I am only wary of the talented Wuya who is very clear headed. His strength was also so outstanding that he was said to be the strongest amongst the mountain people. He was the one who initiated the proposal of asking the Empire to acknowledge their chief while declaring themselves as the vassal of the Empire. These are not ideas the barbarians could think of. It would be too much of a threat to the Empire if Wuya continued to lead the mountain soldiers!"

Rody sighed, "Fortunately, he had been attacked by an assassin... But, how could a person of his ability get injured by an assassin? Is there really someone from the mountain people who can

assassinate him?”

Camus shook his head and replied, “I do not know. Whatever it is, this is beneficial for us. I still think we should go and negotiate with them. We should find a chance to sow discord. If this does not work, then we can offer them some benefits and cause more chaos in their current crisis. As long as Wuya falls from power, I will no longer need to heed the rest of the mountain tribes!”

Rody thought for a moment and then he could not help but point out, “This is not a bad idea. However, it is just a temporary solution! Even if Wuya falls from power, the rise of the mountain tribes would only be delayed for several years. In the future, there may be a second or even a third Wuya. By then, the same problem would arise again.”

Camus looked at Rody with a complicated expression. He was silent and thought to himself for a long time before saying with a smile, “Follow me!”

After that, he took Rody’s hand and dragged him out of the Governor-General’s office.

Standing at the entrance of the office, Camus pointed to the pedestrians on the streets. Although there was a major upheaval the night prior, that seemed to have no effect on the city. With the implementation of martial law, there were fewer pedestrians on the streets than usual. However, the Purple Leaf City was still the main city in the South. As a result, there were still a lot of pedestrians on the streets.

“Do you see those people?” Camus’ tone sounded deep. “Among those people are some that are from the Empire, some of them are mountain people and some of them have mixed blood.”

Rody nodded, looking puzzled.

Camus slowly explained, “Before I was thirty years old, I only understood that the opposing side is the enemy and that the sword

is the best weapon! However, when I came to the South, I have gradually learned a lot of things that I had never known.”

Rody looked at Camus silently and patiently waited for him to continue.

Camus sighed and continued, “The mountain people are brave and ruthless. This is part of their natural instincts. It is not possible to conquer them with the sword! Kill them? How many of them can you kill? There are millions of mountain people. Are you going to kill all of them? This is absolutely impossible. Even if you use a strong force to subjugate them, they would still be able to cause disorder. A few hundred years ago, Abbas the Great had conquered the Southern Region. The mountain people who lived on the plains were all chased into the mountains. At that time, the population of the mountain people was less than two hundred thousand. However, after a few decades, they still managed to cause trouble. They had constantly caused trouble in the Southeast and soldiers were always sent to destroy them. If the Empire is a giant, then the mountain people are like a giant's flea. It would suddenly appear and cause disturbance. Once you hit it, it would run away and hide!”

“This is why the mountain people cannot be dealt with the same way as the people of the Northwest Region. The mountain people will never surrender. However, they can be assimilated. Look at the people on the streets. In the last few years, the mountain people have integrated with the people of the Empire to the extent that there is hardly any difference between the two. Aside from their facial features, they are already similar in the way they dress, the way they apply make-up, their lifestyles, and their habits. For this kind of people, the more you oppress them, the more they would refuse to surrender. When they become strong and powerful, they would remember their grievances and oppose you with hatred.”

Camus bluntly said, “Seth, during the era of Abbas the Great, one

of your ancestors, the late Duke had killed a lot of people in the Northwest. The grassland people of the Northwest were killed in a bloody massacre by your ancestor. The grassland's rivers ran red with blood... The result? They hid in the grasslands and harbored their hatred. They refused to have any dealings with the Empire... Hehe. You also saw what happened in the Northwest after they had gained power."

"However, the mountain people are different. Although they had been conquered for a long time, they were still willing to integrate with the Empire. After more than a hundred years, the only pure blooded mountain people left are those tribes who lived together in the mountains. The rest of them have already been assimilated."

"Ten years ago, when I arrived to suppress the riots, I did not kill too many people. That was because I knew that there was no benefit in killing more of them. That would only deepen the hatred between both sides and made the problem even more difficult to resolve! The only solution to the problems in the Southern Region was to wait! I must wait for the mountain people to integrate with the people of the Empire until the mountain people became people of the Empire!"

Rody heard that and was suddenly enlightened. He looked at Camus with surprise and replied, "General Camus. I did not expect you to have thought so far ahead... but... according to what you said, how many years is required to solve this mountain problem?"

Camus gave a wry smile, "I do not know. Perhaps one or two generations. I have been here working hard for ten years. However, the few Governors-General who were dispatched by the Empire... hmm... they view the mountain people as barbarians. They are afraid of the mountain people and hate them to the core. Here I am, trying to appease the mountain people, but the Governors-General antagonize them and all my efforts were in vain... Sigh..."

Rody was silent for a long time before saying, "The sword can

only provide a momentary, not permanent, peace. General Camus. I finally understand your intentions."

Camus lightly said, "After hundreds of years later, there will no longer be any division of the mountain people and the people of the Empire. Then, the South will be able to have peace."

Rody's mind stirred and he asked, "What about the Northwest? Can the Northwest use the same method to resolve their problem?"

Camus shook his head and sneered, "The mountain people are different from the grassland foreigners in the Northwest. The people of the grasslands are naturally aggressive! They believe in the wolves! They ride horses from a young age and once they become fit and strong, they would naturally expand their borders! However, the mountain people are different. Although they are brave and ruthless, they are not as aggressive! They are like the bears of the mountains. Although ferocious, as long as they have sufficient territory, they would not venture outside! They are attached to the mountains and are reluctant to leave. All they want is their own territory!"

Camus paused for a moment before continuing, "Besides that, they now have the intentions to build a nation and have stood up in defiance of the Empire. If that happens, assimilation would no longer be possible. However, if you want to use force like how Abbas the Great suppressed the grasslands... hmm... with the Empire's current strength..."

After that, Camus stopped speaking and did not continue. Both of them felt dejected.

After a long time, Camus sneered again and said, "I have said so much that I almost forgot my purpose of coming here. This negotiation must be done. However, the current question is who would be the one to go?" As he said that, Camus intentionally or unintentionally looked at Rody.

It then dawned on Rody. In the Southern Region, the most influential people were Camus, that Governor-General and himself. For the negotiations, sending an unimportant person with a low position would not only be useless but also displayed insincerity. However, Camus was absolutely unable to leave. After all, he was commanding the Southern Legion and was a deterrent to the attacks of the mountain people. The Governor-General was a bungling oaf and nothing good would come out of it if he went. The only person that could go would be Rody himself.

After thinking for a while, Rody smiled and replied, "General Camus, I understand. Looks like I have to take a trip to the mountains."

Camus looked serious and sternly said, "I want to warn you that this journey will be incredibly dangerous. After all, the mountain people are ready to rebel. If they were to suddenly turn hostile, you may lose your life!"

Rody's heart shook and then he slowly laughed, "I am the Duke of the Tulip Family. I will not so easily lose my life in the mountains! I would also like to meet this Wuya. I want to see him for myself and find out why he is so highly regarded by you... Hehe, you said that he is another Reuenthal. Last time when I was in the Northwest, I did not have the chance to meet Reuenthal. This time, I must not miss this opportunity."

Camus gave Rody a glance and slowly replied, "Good! However, you must be careful. Wuya is regarded as the best warrior of the mountain people, yet he was attacked by an assassin. That assassin must be very powerful and I am afraid it will not be so easy to deal with him..."

Pausing for a moment, Camus sighed and slowly said, "Seth. I had met you when you were younger. To tell you the truth, all these years when I heard of your actions in the Imperial Capital, I thought that the Tulip Family would be over in this generation. I did not expect that when we finally meet..."

He looked at Rody with a profound expression and said, “This was not expected of your family!”

Chapter 110: Chief of the Flame Tribe

Rody and Camus chatted for the whole morning. After that, Camus went back to the barracks outside the city. Before leaving, Camus mentioned about the management of those mountain soldiers. Rody thought for a moment and then he replied, “Just watch them for now. As you have said. There would be no benefit in killing more people.”

Camus lightly asked, “Is that so? However, you had a murderous glint in your eyes last night.” Having said that, Camus left.

Rody sat down for a moment. He felt stirred by Camus’ final words. He could not help but think. This Camus looks fierce and boorish but his heart is bigger and he is wiser.

After that, Rody could not help but smile. Camus is a famous general of the Empire in this generation. He is second only to the late Duke of the Tulip Family. Naturally, he is very formidable.

He thought to himself for a moment and dispatched someone to go and summon Xier’s Governor-General. That Governor-General looked anxious and afraid. He did not dare to look into Rody’s eyes. Rody sighed as he knew the reason was that the Governor-General was afraid of him. The Governor-General was afraid that Rody may pursue matters related to his nephew. Although Rody was disgusted, he still managed to show a gentle expression and say a few comforting words. Rody did not say anything about the negotiations. Instead, Rody talked about dispatching a person to meet the leader of the mountain tribes to persuade the tribes to pledge allegiance to the Empire as an attempt at a peaceful solution.

As he talked, Rody looked directly at the Governor-General. This caused the Governor-General to sweat profusely due to fear. With a sullen expression, he claimed that he was physically weak and might not be able to adapt to the atmosphere of the mountains.

The Governor-General also said that he was busy and might not be able to find the time to travel into the mountains.

Rody gave a cold smile and said, "This matter does not need the Governor-General to be present. After all, I am His Majesty's special envoy. For matters related to appeasement, I should be the one going to show our sincerity."

That Governor-General felt greatly relieved and pretended to discourage Rody from going. He said that the people of the mountains were cruel and malicious. He said that the Duke's health is priceless and should not be risked. The Governor-General carried on and on until Rody felt tired listening. Rody then said, "It is either you or me." That frightened the Governor-General to the point where he did not dare to dissuade Rody any longer. Finally, the Governor-General wished Rody success and said, "The Duke's reputation has spread far and wide. I am sure that those barbarians will be cautious and pledge allegiance to you." After saying that, the Governor-General quickly left.

After more than ten days of rest, the situation at the barracks outside the city was finally stabilized. The mountain soldiers no longer caused trouble. Camus contacted Wuya's men and then Wuya dispatched one of the leaders of the Flame Tribe to the Purple Leaf City to meet Camus. Camus then brought the leader to meet Rody.

That leader's name is Wuyu. He was big and tall. He had a brown face and brown eyes. He also looked valiant. He knew how to speak the common language of the Empire but his pronunciation was not too accurate. When Camus told him about the Duke's intentions to see their Chief, Wuya, Wuyu was surprised. Wuyu had also heard of the Duke of the Tulip Family's reputation. He did not expect that such a big shot would personally go and negotiate. When he saw Rody's young and handsome figure, he revealed an expression of doubt and disdain. He did not expect the Duke of the Tulip Family to be so young.

The mountain people were mostly big-sized warriors. On the other hand, Rody looked young and had the handsome face of a playboy. Although Rody could be considered tall and quite robust in the Empire, he was still considered relatively small-sized by the standards of the mountain people. When compared with Wuyu, even though they were about the same height, Wuyu was much more muscular and robust than Rody.

From Wuyu's point of view, Rody's giant-like bodyguard Randt deserved more respect...

The guards that Wuyu brought were also tall and robust. All of them wore wolves' skin over their bodies and carried longbows on their backs. They smeared some strange oil paint on their faces which made them looked ferocious. Randt could not bear the sight of them but he just followed Rody closely, remaining vigilant.

On the same day, Rody took Randt with him as they followed Wuyu to the mountains. Randt had originally requested Rody to bring more people with them but Rody refused. Rody gave a faint smile and told Randt, "We are entering their territory. If they want to harm us, there will be no use even if we were to bring more people. We cannot bring an army into the mountains, right? Are we there to fight or to negotiate?" Looking at Randt's puzzled expression, Rody continued, "Come to think of it, Wuya was able to unite all the mountain tribes. He must be a heroic figure. Naturally, he is unlikely to make things difficult for an envoy. This will be degrading for him."

They traveled southwards from Purple Leaf City on their horses. After a day of traveling, they arrived at the Southeast barracks. Rody replenished his food and water at the barracks before following Wuyu into the mountains.

The way to the mountains was via a canyon, south of the Southeast barracks. After walking on a trail from the canyon for a day, they finally entered the mountains.

The terrain in the canyon was extremely dangerous. The narrow path only had enough space for two horses to squeeze through. The path was uneven and was full of all kinds of large and small rocks. The horses could only advance slowly.

The mountain people did not ride horses. Instead, they led the way on foot. They only wore straw slippers made from wild grass but they were able to progress through the mountain road as if they had wings.

By nightfall, they finally exited the canyon on the southern side and followed a small trail to enter the mountains. Rody and Randt finally abandoned their horses. The horses followed their instincts and would find their way back. The two of them then followed the mountain people to walk on foot.

Along the way, Rody saw that there were a lot of trees and the roadside was full of unknown weeds. The trees were so dense that they could blot out the sun almost entirely. Rody and the others only walked for a while but their trousers were already sodden with the dew and the saps of the weeds.

One of the mountain people led the way with his sharp longsword. He hacked at the branches that blocked their way. Rody felt a bit uncomfortable when he breathed in the humid air of the forest.

The further they progressed into the mountains, the sturdier the trees became. Some trees were so big that its girth needed two to three people to be able to hug it. Rody could not help but sigh. However, Wuyu proudly declared, "This is nothing! The largest tree at our place would require more than a dozen people to hug it!"

At night, everybody stopped to rest. The mountain people's camping method was also very unique and strange. They did not allow Randt to start a fire. They said it was too dangerous to start a fire in the mountains. Randt asked them loudly. "Without any fire,

how do we prevent the wild beasts from attacking?" The mountain people grinned. They hastily created traps with some ropes and sharp branches. They then took out the strange oil paint and smeared it all over their exposed skin. After that, they looked for a large tree. Those tall and strong mountain people then climbed the trees like monkeys and casually slept on the branches.

Rody and Randt looked at each other. Neither of them knew how to climb a tree to sleep there. Even if they were to climb the tree and sleep on it, they would be afraid of falling off the tree when they rolled in their sleep.

The mountain people did not bother to help them. Instead, they looked at the two of them with a gloating expression and waited for the two of them to make a fool of themselves.

Rody said nothing. He and Randt sat down under a big tree and leaned against the tree trunk. They then closed their eyes to sleep.

In the middle of the night, a cold wind was blowing. The chirping cries of birds could be heard. In the distance, there was also the continuous, faint howling of wild beasts. From the bushes, there was the assorted singing of various wild insects. All those sounds made Rody extremely disturbed. In the middle of the night, Randt could not help but jump up and attempt to catch and kill the mosquitoes that bit him. These movements roused the mountain people from their sleep. They all pointed and laughed at Randt.

Randt became angry and unsheathed his sword. He then argued with the people on the trees.

Rody also stood up. He suppressed the anger in his heart and stopped Randt. After that, he looked up at Wuyu and coldly said, "Wuyu, when you came to the Purple Leaf City, we showed you proper hospitality. We are now in your territory! Is this how you mountain people treat your guests?"

With those words, Wuyu's laughter immediately stopped. Although it was not visible in the dark, Wuyu face showed shame.

He shouted to the others on the tree in the mountain people's language and they gradually stopped laughing. After that, Wuyu jumped down from the tree and walked up to Rody before saying, "You are right! This was my mistake! This is not how we mountain people treat our guests!" He then took out a small package containing the oil paint they used to smear on their faces. He then said in a low voice, "Apply this on your body and the insects will not bite you."

The oil paint had a strange smell. Both Randt and Rody pinched their noses and desperately smeared the oil paint all over their exposed skin. Although the smell was unpleasant, the mosquitos avoided it and stopped disturbing them.

When morning dawned, the mountain people leaped down from the trees. The first thing they did was to kneel down as a group, facing south. They mumbled some kind of incantation. Their pious expression was filled with religious fervor as if they were worshipping God.

Rody was curious and could not help but ask Wuyu. Wuyu's attitude towards Rody also improved and explained that they were worshipping the guardian spirit of the Flame Tribe. As for the name of the guardian spirit, Wuyu only knew how to say it in the language of the mountain people. The name had a bunch of strange pronunciations that Rody could not help but make a wry smile.

With that, they walked for several days. The forest became thicker and the mountain ranges could be seen. The towering green mountains could be seen in the far west. The birds were flying in flocks. Early in the morning, a white fog could also be seen gathering around the peaks of the mountains.

The appearance of wild animals in the forests also became increasingly more frequent. Wild boars, wild deer, and wild rabbits started to appear one after another. Those animals did not seem to be afraid of people. When the animals saw Rody and the

others, they simply retreated a few steps back and observed them from afar.

Rody and the others had already finished eating the supplies that they packed. However, the mountain people were born hunters. All of them were good at archery. The arrows they used were different from the arrows used by the Empire. The arrows they used were not made of metal. They were made with the fangs of animals.

The mountain people could also move easily in the mountains. They were energetic and they knew the terrain well. Rody secretly contemplated. If they fought a war here, the Empire would suffer a lot of casualties. Camus' words were not an exaggeration.

Originally, the mountain people did not think highly of Rody and Randt. One day, however, they changed their minds. Everybody was at a small stream on top of the mountain and had caught a few fish. Thereafter, they wanted to start a fire to cook the fish. (Rody thought it was strange that the 'Flame Tribe' seldom used flame.) Randt then went to the edge of a brook to chop some firewood.

They saw him pull out his broadsword and then they heard a loud sound. The tree that was as big as a person's waist was immediately chopped into two halves. That made the mountain people awestruck as the tree came crashing down.

Everyone, including Wuyu, was stunned. After a while, they all started to shout. They ran up and took a close look at Randt. They then enthusiastically hugged Randt and muttered a few words that Randt could not understand. They all had expressions of admiration, surprise, and curiosity. Some of them even grabbed Randt's sword to examine it.

Wuyu then explained to Rody that even the most powerful person among their mountain people would need several swings of an ax to chop down that tree.

Rody's heart was stirred and could not help but asked, "What

about your leader Wuya? How powerful is he?"

Wuyu immediately showed a pious and respectful expression as he seriously replied, "Our Chief, Wuya is a warrior bestowed unto us by God! He is an avatar! He is our guardian angel! How can we compare with our God?"

Rody did not believe in it, so he casually laughed. Wuyu noticed that Rody did not believe him and immediately became angry. He loudly argued about the greatness and terrifying strength of their chief, Wuya.

At last, Wuyu impatiently shouted, "Our Chief is the greatest! Last time, we fought a battle against the Silvermoon Tribe. Our Chief summoned the Mountain God's Tremendous Ax and flattened the Silvermoon Tribe and their homes on the hills! This is a true story. A lot of warriors from the Flame Tribe witnessed that. I also clearly witnessed that!"

Rody's heart stirred as he looked at Wuyu's honest and impatient expression. With a blank expression, he asked, "What sort of weapon is the Mountain God's Tremendous Ax?"

"Miraculous! It is truly miraculous!" Wuyu showed a marveled and respectful expression. After that, he solemnly said, "Our Chief stood on a mountain and shouted a few words. After that, he suddenly grew several times larger, as though he was a giant! The Chief then reached out and pulled an ax out from the sky! Before we could see anything clearly, the Chief had swung down his ax. The Silvermoon Tribe and the mountains were flattened! Flattened! There was nothing left! Men, women, children, the elderly, houses, trees, and even stones... Everything disappeared!"

Randt and Rody both thought of something... They could not help but exchanged a look with each other.

Chapter 111: Heavenly Abode of the Mountains

Rody realized that Wuya's power was definitely extraordinary. It was probably a kind of magic or sorcery. That being said, the ability to turn into a giant was not something that Rody had ever heard of before even in large scale magic or sorcery. On the other hand, destroying an entire mountain was nothing surprising. After all, Rody had already experienced a spell as terrifying as that during his encounter with the Black Veil Saint Mouse.

However, could a tribal leader of the so-called 'barbarians' actually have the power of a high-level magician or sorcerer?

It is possible. Master Autumn that was held in high regard by the Empire could do something like this. However, Master Autumn was also only recognized as the most promising candidate to become the next Sacred Swordsman and a Master grade warrior.

Although Rody heard that Wuya was the 'strongest warrior of the mountains', he only expected Wuya to be at the level of a high-level warrior of the Imperial Army. As the mountain people live in the wild, their warriors are usually just strong and ferocious people. Rody only expected Wuya to be around Randt's level.

As a result, Rody felt overwhelmed by Wuyu's words.

If Wuyu's words are true, the Chief of the Flame Tribe is already one of the strongest people on the continent.

Wuya is unlikely to be a sorcerer. That is because the entire Radiant Continent does not have many sorcerers. On the other hand, sorcerers prosper in the Northern Roland Continent. It is also difficult to believe that Wuya is a magician. All the high-level magicians work for the Empire, while other magicians are usually found in religious posts. It is unlikely that the tribal leader of the barbarians would be able to learn spells. It is also unlikely for the

tribes to be able to understand the ancient language of the incantations.

In that case, Wuya should be a master of warriors. Could it be possible for him to have reached the rank of Sacred Swordsman?

Could a person wearing the skin of animals and a bone necklace, smeared paint on his face and spoke barbarian language be a Sacred Swordsman?

Randt could not help but whispered to Rody, “Your Excellency. The words of the mountain people may not be true. If this Wuya is so formidable, how did he almost get assassinated?”

Rody nodded and then asked Wuyu about this incident. However, Wuyu claimed that this was caused by the evil magic of the other tribes. Wuyu then proclaimed his belief that the Chief would recover and lead them to crush these tribes. He spoke so excitedly that he ended up speaking quickly and also reverted back to the mountain people’s language. Rody who heard this only ended up confused.

After walking for ten days, Rody and Randt were already lost. They were shrouded by so many trees that they could not even see the sky. They only continued to follow the mountain people. The mountain people followed a winding path to cleverly avoid the poisonous swamps. The mountain people knew the mountains like the back of their hand, it was like they were in their own bedroom. Rody secretly thought to himself that if it was just Randt and himself, they would more likely to die falling into the poisonous swamps than to die fighting.

When evening approached, they finally left the mountainous path and entered an open space. They could see the thick foliage of grass and a canyon at a distant mountain peak.

Wuyu then shouted. “We are almost there! Once we reach the canyon, there will be a small road that will lead us up the mountain. After we cross that mountain, we would reach home!”

The mountain warriors were all excited and shouted loudly. Some of them even somersaulted.

Rody could not help but ask, “Small road? Why do we not pass through the canyon?”

Wuyu immediately showed a fearful expression and replied, “You cannot go there! That is the Death Canyon! It would lead you to the Dead Forest! You cannot go there! If you enter the Dead Forest, you can never return!”

“Oh?” Rody was surprised and could not help but ask, “There are actually places on this mountain that even the mountain people cannot approach?”

Wuyu looked at the canyon in fear. “All the tribes know about this taboo and none would dare to enter! It is said that there is a demon in there! We will never go there!”

Rody could not help but loudly asked, “What about your chief? Didn’t you say he that came from the heavens? Is he also afraid to go in there?”

Wuyu replied softly with a complicated expression, “The Chief had dispatched people to explore the Dead Forest before but... none of them returned! If you enter that canyon, you will never come out!”

Listening to these words, Rody could not help but glance at the canyon. He saw a trail in between the two mountains. There were only stones and not a single blade of grass could be found on that trail.

That location was different compared to the other mountains. The canyon was completely silent and not even the sound of birds could be heard. It was really like a dead location. Rody demanded to enter the canyon and the mountain people all stood at a distance looking frightened. Rody ignored them and entered the canyon together with Randt.

Suddenly a cold wind blew from the canyon and made both men shiver. This had really surprised them. The climate in the mountains was warm and humid but the wind blowing from within the canyon was like the cold winter wind of the Northwest Region. The trail was also covered in a dense fog.

“Your Excellency. Something seems to be strange here,” Randt could not help but say. “Your status now is different and you cannot risk it.”

Rody smiled and replied. “I am only curious. Let’s go!”

The mountain people felt relief when they saw Rody and Randt turn around. They then quickly pulled the two away from the canyon.

They followed a small road on the left and found a winding path up the mountain. This road was a secret entrance and without the help of the mountain people, Rody would never be able to discover this road.

He saw Wuyu push away the withered trees to reveal a road leading towards the mountain. Wuyu felt excited. He withdrew a small bone from his garments and blew it.

Not long after that, a sharp whistle sounded. After that, there was the faint sound of footsteps as hundreds of mountain warriors came running down the mountain. Most of the mountain warriors were dressed in animal skins. A few of them wore linen clothing that they somehow weaved. All of them wore straw sandals. They held simplistic short spears in their hands but they also carried bows and arrows at their backs.

At that moment, Rody did not dare to ridicule the mountain people’s simple and crude weapons. On his journey here, he had learned how powerful the mountain people could be. This was especially when they used their bow and arrows. Rody did not know what the mountain people laced their arrows with but they were able to easily kill the majestic black bears of the mountains in

one shot. Coupled with their skillful archery, they would be unparalleled.

Hundreds of the mountain warriors casually stood in front as they were immediately followed by a tall and robust man from behind.

That man wore the skin of a leopard and a feathered crown. He held a long wooden cane in his hand. His face was painted with red paint as if he was a ghost. He looked at Rody and Randt with his pair of brown eyes.

Wuyu had already walked up to the crowned man. He lowered his head and said something in a very respectful manner. The man nodded and then he raised his wooden stick and shouted loudly. The mountain warriors that heard his shout also raised their spears and made an uproar.

Once they had quieted down, Rody took a deep breath and walked up to that person. After that, he said, "I am the Empire's Duke of the Tulip Family. I came from Purple Leaf City and greet Wuya of the Flame Tribe!" After he finished speaking, he opened up his arms and prepared to embrace the other party according to what he learned of the mountain people's customs.

Wuyu then whispered from the side. "This is not the Elder of our tribe. This is our Elder Shaman!"

"Hm?" Rody froze for a moment and then he laughed. "In that case, I greet the Elder Shaman!"

The Elder Shaman nodded and smiled at Rody before turning around and walking away. Wuyu then laughed and told Rody. "You may not understand this, but shamans are not supposed to embrace others. He greeted you earlier when he raised his cane."

Rody laughed and replied, "So that is what it was. Let's go!"

They continued to follow the mountain path until they reached a dark cave. A few warriors standing at the entrance bowed their

heads when they saw the shaman. They then showed their surprise and hostility when they saw Rody and Randt. The shaman did not bother to clarify and continued to lead the crowd further into the cave.

There were torches lined along the walls of the cave. The smell of burning fat assailed their nostrils and it flooded the narrow passageway. The faint sound of water dripping could also be heard in some places. Randt vigilantly followed behind Rody as he looked around the cave. After about half an hour, they saw something bright. Rody looked up and saw that they were about to reach the end of the cave. He sighed and thought in his heart. This place is really well hidden. It's no wonder that the mountain people could survive for hundreds of years and the Empire were never able to subdue them.

When they exited the cave, they entered a valley with a village with stockade fortifications. The walls and houses were all made of wood. When the wooden gate opened, all the mountain warriors started to sing.

A crowd of mountain people came out from the wooden houses and gathered. All of their clothes were coarse and crude, regardless of age or gender. All of them also seemed to possess a weapon. Some of the women had daggers tied to their feet. A lot of children also approached but remained at a certain distance. They were all shouting and pointing.

Rody guessed that this valley could sustain about thirty to forty thousand people. Just as soon as he thought of that, Wuyu told him loudly, "This is the village that our Flame Tribe has lived in for more than a hundred years. The shape of the village is like a gourd. This is only half of it. Turn at that corner and you will find a place that is much bigger."

Rody walked down the street and turned to find a village that was indeed much bigger than the one in front. The mountain people in that area were very sturdy and had large hands and legs. Rody

could hear the sound of clanking coming from a row of cabins. There was also a chimney on the roof that was giving out smoke. Rody whispered and asked, "What is that place?"

Wuyu smiled and replied, "That is the forge. There is no shortage of iron ores on the mountain. All of the tribes make their own iron tools. Their work is also comparable to the Empire's weapons."

At the walls of the valley, they saw water gushing out of the walls. Located near the walls was a small pond with a few soldiers standing next to it. There were also a few women who carried jars as they lined up to collect water.

Wuyu explained in a strange manner, "This is our source of water. When the chief ascended the position, he ordered for a few guards to stand guard here. Everyone had to line up to collect water and nobody was allowed to bath in this pool anymore. The Chief has made many good decisions but this rule is a little bit weird."

Rody gave a supercilious look as he thought. The whole valley only has this much water. Naturally, they must be careful with it. Wouldn't it be bad if they had bathed here as well? I have not met him but Wuya has already given me a favorable impression. I will also stay here for a few days. If the mountain people had bathed in this water as well... Rody could not help but give a strange expression as he replied, "I think your Chief is right. Let me ask you. When the Chief rose to power, did the number of sick people decrease?"

Wuyu stared with wide eyes and felt extremely puzzled. "How did you know?"

They soon arrived at a row of buildings built on top of a huge wooden platform. There is a long flight of wooden steps that led to a large wooden building. The large wooden building was more exquisite compared to the others. There were banners made with animal skin draped in front of the building. Several large guards

stood outside the entrance.

The front entrance was also enormous. The curtains hanging at the entrance blocked Rody's view. When Rody approached, he found out that the curtain was made by strings of small and large shiny crystals. "This Chief is really a dignified person. The gates of the Imperial Palace were only made of gold. However, a mere Tribal Chief had actually made his curtain out of precious crystals!"

The warriors who stood at the entrance walked forward and exchanged a few words with Wuyu. After that, Wuyu turned around and told Rody, "The shaman asks you to wait for a little while. He has entered to speak with the Chief and the Chief would summon you soon."

Rody nodded and stood on the wooden platform. Randt stood close to Rody and vigilantly looked at the surrounding mountain warriors.

While Rody was waiting, he suddenly heard Andy's surprised voice. "This... There is a strange feeling..."

Chapter 112: Prophecy

“What?”

Rody was shocked to hear Andy’s surprised voice. In his mind, Andy was a skeleton that would be able to stay composed even if the sky started to fall. It was very rare to see him surprised.

There was a moment of silence before Andy replied, “Strong! Very strong! There is some kind of energy... Shit! It is not any kind of magical or spiritual energy! Kid. You have to be careful. There is someone ridiculously powerful inside!”

“What is it?” Rody was also serious.

“I do not know,” Andy sounded helpless as he replied, “I can’t see through to the inside. The see-through spell is also useless! There is a very powerful person inside. It is someone who is more powerful than anyone you have ever encountered.”

“Could it be the chief?” Rody asked, “Is he more powerful than you, Old Mark and Mouse?”

“I do not know,” Andy sounded very serious. “However, that is probably true! From the vibrations, it is likely that this person can use ‘Domain Force’!

“What?” Rody could not help but speak out. He then took a deep breath and continued to stay silent. The people around him also looked at him in surprise. The mountain people thought it was strange that the people of the Empire would suddenly shout for no reason. After that, Randt asked in a whisper, “Your Excellency. Is something wrong?”

“No. Nothing.” Rody gave a serious expression and shook his head. After that, he secretly said, “‘Domain Force’? Andy. Did you say ‘Domain Force’? Didn’t Mouse say that after reaching the level of ‘Domain Force’ it is almost like reaching the level of God?”

Andy gave a strange laugh that sounded uneasy. “The level of

God? Didn't the mountain people say that their Chief had descended from the heavens?"

At this moment, the shaman appeared from behind the curtain and faintly said something. Wuyu immediately shouted after that, "Duke of Tulip. Please come in."

Rody looked at Randt and said, "Wait here for me." He then stepped forward and walked through the curtain.

The interior of the wooden house was very large. Rody felt that something was wrong and soon realized that this house did not have any windows.

The room was filled with a strange plant-like smell. There was a copper stove in the room. There was a life-like snake sculpture on top of the stove. Smoke slowly rose from the snake's mouth. On a platform not far from there was the figure of the famous Chief Wuya who was sitting cross-legged.

Rody was surprised that the mountain people's 'strongest warrior', the Chief, looked extremely weak.

Although Wuya was just sitting there, it was clear that he was not tall. In fact, he was small sized even when compared to Rody. Wuya was different compared to the other mountain people. He was wearing white linen clothing and his face was clean and beardless. His face also did not have the painting of the mountain people.

The more startling thing was that Wuya's face was white. It was white and a little bit transparent like a block of ice. His face was so strange that it was unlike the face of a human. On the other hand, it was more like a jade carving.

At that moment, Wuya's eyes were closed and he was just sitting with his back leaning against the wall.

Suddenly, Rody felt his eyes glow. At the same time, Wuya who was in front of him was also wrapped in a glow. A light was

moving around the body as if the person was on fire. His body was shining as if he was a flame illuminating the area.

Rody knew that Andy was using the see-through spell with his eyes. The light moving around Wuya was that person's fluctuating energy.

Suddenly Wuya opened his eyes. His eyes were extremely cold and did not have a single trace of emotion. He looked at Rody so coldly as if he was a God looking at an ant.

"Are you watching me?" His voice was light. It was in the language of the Empire but the voice was calm and devoid of emotion.

"What?" Rody's expression did not change. "Chief Wuya. What are you talking about?"

Wuya slowly closed his eyes and gently repeated. "Duke of a distant land. You are watching me. Why?"

Rody was secretly afraid and Andy was disturbed. "He can detect me!"

Rody cleared his throat and slowly replied, "Chief Wuya. I was watching you because I did not expect the famous Chief of the Flame Tribe to have this kind of appearance."

Wuya's voice was still extremely cold as he asked, "I noticed that your body has a fluctuation of magic. Duke. Are you a warrior or a sorcerer?"

"Warrior," Rody involuntarily replied. He felt a strange feeling. It was as if the Chief of the mountain people gave out an extraordinary pressure. Wuya's light voice sounded infinitely majestic. It was as if Wuya could see through Rody with just a glance.

Wuya raised an eyebrow as he continued to look at Rody. "Warrior? In that case, the magical fluctuations in your body must be because you possess a magical treasure. I heard that the Radiant

Empire's Tulip Family was the most formidable family. Is that your family?"

Rody tried to calm himself down and walked forward a few steps. He then smiled and said, "Chief. You invited me here for negotiations. I believe it is not to talk about my Tulip Family. Now that I am here, isn't there something more important to discuss?"

Wuya was silent for a while and then he nodded his head and agreed. "Alright. Duke, please sit."

After Rody has sat down, Wuya slowly started the conversation. "Duke. If you are here, you must have brought your conditions. There is nobody else besides us right now. Please speak directly."

Rody was startled and did not expect that Wuya would be so direct. He thought for a moment and then replied, "Chief Wuya. I would like to take the liberty to say that we cannot comply with your demands. Before anything else, the uniting of the tribes and the election of a Chief is something that His Majesty the Emperor would never accept. Since hundreds of years ago, the law made by Abbas the Great stated that the tribes cannot elect a Chief. This action is undoubtedly a challenge against the Empire."

Wuya smiled and asked, "Since all of you cannot accept the demands, why did the Duke travel here?"

Rody took a deep breath and replied, "I came to persuade Chief Wuya to give up this intention."

Wuya looked at Rody and asked again, "Duke. Do you know my intentions?"

Rody gave a cold smile and answered, "Chief Wuya is ambitious. You want to unify the tribes of the mountains and establish a foundation!"

Wuya was silent for a moment. After that, he started to laugh. Wuya's white face seemed to glow as he slowly replied, "Unite everyone and establish a foundation? Looks like all of you think

that way as well...”

“Am I wrong?”

Contrary to Rody’s expectations, Wuya shook his head and replied, “You are wrong.”

“Oh?” Rody did not expect Wuya to deny it.

“Duke. Frankly speaking, I have no interest in uniting the mountain tribes. I also do not want to establish a foundation.” Wuya’s tone was very calm, “I don’t even care about the title of Chief.”

Rody frowned and said, “Chief Wuya. I am afraid I do not quite understand your words.”

Wuya opened his eyes and looked at Rody. “Duke. Why do you not understand? Haven’t you already made up your mind that your objective here was to find ways to stop our opposition? To find my assassin, destroy our unity and overthrow my authority?”

These words were mentioned casually and calmly. However, the words rang like thunder. Even if Rody could stay calm, he would not be able to stop his cold sweat. Rody’s expression started to change.

“You do not have to be surprised.” Wuya gently waved and lightly declared, “I have already understood your intentions the moment you walked into the room.” Wuya then gave a smile. “I forgot to tell you. I can read minds!”

“What?” Rody could not help and finally whispered, “You can read minds?”

High-level magicians and sorcerers have similar abilities. However, it was used to listen to another person's heartbeat and breathing as they talked. This was generally used to determine if that person is telling the truth or if he was lying. To be able to read another person's mind would be God's magic.

Wuya's voice remained calm and cold. "Duke. Do not be so surprised." Wuya sighed and continued, "For me, I am not interested in power and influence."

"That..." Rody gritted his teeth. "In that case, why do you want to unite the mountain tribes and take the position as Chief? Isn't your actions contradictory and only for the purpose of that objective?"

Wuya looked gloomy and shook his head. "You are wrong... you are all wrong... they are also wrong. Uniting the mountain tribes? Do you mean like the people of the grasslands in the Northwest that established their own country to fight the Empire? Ridiculous. Humans fighting each other is so pointless."

"Humans?" Rody could not help but ask. His breathing had also become heavier. "Could it be that Chief Wuya is not a human?"

Wuya showed a confused expression. He was hesitant for a while before he shook his head and gave Rody a surprising answer, "I do not know."

Rody's mouth turned dry and he wanted to laugh wildly. He wanted to laugh at Wuya's crazy words. However, his heart felt heavy. Somehow managing a smile, Rody asked, "Chief Wuya. What is the meaning of your words?"

Wuya shook his head and replied, "I do not know. However, I can tell you that I have no interest in fighting the Empire. If I wanted to fight you, I would have done it a long time ago. The Southern Legion would not be able to stop me."

Rody was silent for a moment before he coldly asked, "What exactly do you want?"

"A promise!" Wuya opened his eyes and demanded, "I want the Empire to ensure that no one would enter the mountains!"

"What?" Rody looked at the chief of the mountain people in surprise. "You only want that?" Rody secretly thought. If he really

only asked the Empire not to step into the mountains, it would not be difficult for the Empire to accept. The Empire had no interest in the mountains. However, is that really the objective of the possibly ambitious Chief?”

Rody asked again, “Chief Wuya. I am afraid I do not really understand your words. I hope you can give me a complete explanation.”

Wuya slowly stood up and closed his eyes. He took a deep breath and then his cold voice resounded around the house. The voice was like a distant singing.

“Shackles of the millennium have decayed.

The Devil’s eye shall gaze at the Earth.

The blood of the Empire will eventually solidify.

Its vicious curse will taint the radiance of the surface.

They will spread evil throughout the land.

They will bring calamity to the world.

God’s blood will wash away the temple.

The thorns of the withered flower will be the end.”

The song was recited as if it was a magic spell. Rody felt depressed and afraid when he heard this. However, he did not know why he was afraid.

Suddenly, Andy’s voice screamed in his mind, “Prophecy! He speaks of a prophecy!”

“What?” Rody could not help but stand and glared at Wuya.

Wuya gave a wry smile and spoke in low spirits, “Yes. It is a prophecy.”

Rody froze for a moment and pointed at Wuya, “You... What did you say...? You could listen to...”

Wuya gave a smile as he looked at Rody and lightly said, “I was

wondering... Why are there two souls in your body?"

Wuya saw that Rody was at a loss for words before slowly continuing, "Duke. I know you are not an ordinary person. I hope you keep the words I have just said in your mind."

Rody took a deep breath and asked, "Chief Wuya. That... prophecy? What is the meaning of the prophecy? How do you know of it?"

Wuya shook his head and replied, "Find the meaning to the prophecy yourself. Perhaps the other soul within you might know something." Wuya then gave an unfeeling smile and continued, "I just want to tell you that I hope that in the future, the Empire would not send anybody into the mountains! I will also keep the mountain people in the mountains. The mountain is our world. We will not go out. However, none can enter! Otherwise, I will not show mercy!"

Rody's face turned pale as he murmured, "The vicious curse will stain the radiance of the surface. They will bring disaster and calamity everywhere. Is the radiance the Radiant Empire? What is the curse? What is the disaster?"

Wuya shook his head and replied, "I do not know. I only hope that the mountain people would be able to escape. The mountain people only live in the mountains. The mountain is our home. If there is a disaster, let it happen outside the mountains!"

Rody was agitated and shouted, "Nonsense! Nonsense!"

Wuya simply laughed and replied, "I was speaking nonsense? In that case, what benefits would I obtain from that? Is there anything from what I said that would inconvenience the Empire?"

Rody became silent.

What would the Empire lose by agreeing to those terms?

The Empire must not enter the mountains? What a joke! Since centuries ago, the Empire was never interested in the mountains

and only wished for the stability of the cities in the Southern Region.

The strange Chief's demands are for the Empire to not enter the mountains. He wants the mountains and the Empire to be completely separated. Could it... Could it really be to escape the 'disaster' in the prophecy? If he speaks nonsense, why would he lie to himself?

The more Rody thought, the more confused he became. His breathing started to become heavier.

When Rody somehow managed to calm himself, Rody asked again, "In that case, Chief Wuya. Why did you try to unite the mountain tribes? Why did you try to incite a rebellion from the mountain soldiers in the army?"

Wuya shook his head and answered, "The union of the mountain tribes is inevitable. The Empire is like a strong magnet that would attract the mountain people. The mountain people would then slowly become a part of the Empire. If this goes on, the disaster in the future would definitely plague the mountains! A united mountain nation is the requirement so that it would not get assimilated by the Empire. As for the incitement of the rebellion... Those were not due to my orders."

"That was not ordered by you?" Rody shook his head. "You are the person recognized as the Chief of the mountain people! If it was not ordered by you, who else could it be?"

Wuya slowly walked to the copper stove and placed his hand on the mouth of the snake. He allowed the white mist to spray onto his palm. With a complicated look on his face, he said, "You people of the Empire have a more complicated way of thinking compared to us mountain people. How is it that you still do not understand? There are also mountain people that are ambitious. When they are strong, it is hard for them to forget about the hatred from many years ago. They do not mind spilling blood. I do not like it but I

cannot convince them. I... Can't you see it? I am currently a weak patient!"

Rody lowered his voice and asked, "Patient? Wuya could not possibly have fallen sick. Is it true that you were attacked by an assassin?"

Wuya showed a complicated expression and thought for a moment before denying, "No. That is not true! No one can assassinate me! At the very least, nobody on the mountain can do it. My weakened state is because of the Death Canyon. You might have seen it on your way here. A few days ago... I secretly tried to enter it."

Chapter 113: Sneak Attack in the Night

Rody felt depressed after talking to Wuya. Wuya had spoken in riddles, and most of what he said sounded strange. Finally, Wuya stopped talking after he said that he just came back from the Death Canyon.

This conversation also left Rody in shock. All the plans that had been discussed before he arrived were now useless. When a person could read your mind, any kind of strategy would become ineffective. Another important fact was that Wuya was not attacked by an assassin. That meant that the possibility of splitting up the mountain tribes would be low.

After Rody was led by a few mountain warriors to rest in a clean wooden house, he sat down to think. Rody also conversed with Andy in his mind.

“What is the meaning of that prophecy?” Rody asked as he thought of the ‘disaster’ and the ‘curse’.

Andy’s voice sounded dull and dry as he replied, “How would I know? Do you actually believe in the prophecy? Hehe, have you already forgotten about the prohibition placed by Abbas the Great?”

“Prohibition...” Rody muttered and then shook his head as if he was trying to shake off the confusion in his mind.

Rody naturally knew about that ‘prohibition’.

Among the practitioners in this world, there were warriors, magicians, and sorcerers that sought to control and manipulate energy. However, two hundred years ago, during Abbas the Great's era, there was another kind of practitioner. This practitioner was different compared to warriors, magicians, and sorcerers. They were like the most devout religious practitioners. They do not pursue power or wealth or even preach their doctrines to the

masses. Their only purpose was to ‘comprehend the will of God’.

Their practice was really simple. They were usually born with the talent to become great magicians, but then they felt it beneath them to become just powerful magicians. All day long, they would conduct research on god from all angles to prove god's existence. In the eyes of other practitioners, these people were not only crazy but also stupid. This was because these practitioners did not put their innate talents to good use but only wasted time on useless ideas.

These people often had a few strange guys that would spend half their lives meditating and would one day suddenly declare that they had heard God’s instructions. After that, they would say some incomprehensible ideas.

Rody had read about these incidents during his time in the Imperial Academy. He had also found a lot of these records in the books of the Tulip Family. Among those were also records of the more famous ones.

In the Empire year 107, one of the most famous practitioners of the Empire suddenly got up one morning and ran to the streets to shout out that he had received the words of God. “The largest religious church of the Empire would be destroyed in three days because God is angry at his representative’s corruption.”

Naturally, his outrageous words were regarded as the words of a mad person. The practitioner was caught and locked up. Three days later, that practitioner was to be executed by burning at a stake in front of that church. Presiding over the execution was the Pope.

It was said that when the practitioner was being burned to death, the practitioner did not even protest or beg for help. Instead, he laughed as he looked towards the sky. While he was burning, a fierce wind blew. The wind was so strong that the people nearby could not keep their eyes opened. The wind blew the burning

firewood into a fireball that moved towards the church.

The Empire's largest church with hundreds of years of history, the Prometheus Church, was a building that was older than the Empire itself. However, it was burned into ruins. Countless magnificent murals and other things were destroyed in the fire. Even the Bishop of the church had perished in the fire.

The official records of the Empire stated that the Prometheus Church was old and made of timber, which was why it got destroyed in an accident.

Another interesting record was that during the ascension of Abbas the Great, a practitioner declared that the Empire would unify the continent. However, he also said that Abbas the Great would become an unprecedented tyrant. He then said that the debt of blood would be repaid by later generations. As the practitioner had a special status, he was not killed.

When Abbas the Great rose to the throne, the Empire had finally conquered the entire continent. However, the war that lasted seventeen years, had reduced the population by nearly three million people. There were also several hundred thousand people of the grasslands that were ordered to be slaughtered by Abbas the Great. After the people of the grasslands who had a population of over a million was subjugated, only less than four hundred thousand people remained.

Besides that, while the Empire was conquering the south, they were suddenly invaded by the northern Roland Continent. This started a second war with the Roland Continent. The Roland Continent's sudden invasion caused the Empire to fall into a crisis. The Roland Continent's knights had captured the Westwood province and were less than five days' journey away from the Empire's capital. At that time, the entire capital fell into a panic. All the nobles urged Abbas the Great to stop the conquest in the South. They wanted to request for peace negotiations with kingdoms in the South and send the armies to the North. The

situation was so urgent that it caused Abbas the Great and the Empire to waver. However, a practitioner then declared the will of God. He said that the Empire would be able to win the war against the invaders from the Roland Continent and that the Tulip Family banner would defend the Empire.

Finally, the Duke of the Tulip Family leading one hundred thousand of the 'Lightning God's Whip' had completely defeated the northern Roland coalition army of two hundred thousand. The northern Roland invaders ultimately fled back to their continent with less than thirty thousand soldiers remaining. Not only were the invaders repelled in this battle, but the coalition was also destroyed. The political situation in the Roland Continent also experienced a great change, and it was no longer able to unite and become a threat to the Radiant Continent.

On top of that, the one that helped the Duke of the Tulip Family to win that war was the sudden rise of the Great Sage Dandong. It was also because of Dandong's support that Abbas the Great managed to conquer the entire Radiant Continent. Among Dandong's techniques were deception, entrapment, division, and incitement to sow discord in the various kingdoms on the Radiant Continent to destroy their unity. After that, the kingdoms were all destroyed one by one, and the continent was finally united.

These records made some readers paranoid and break out in cold sweat. It somehow felt like the God had a pair of invisible hands to control everything.

The practitioners then became a target of hatred, fear, and discrimination. However, none dared to belittle them. As these practitioners tended to look at the stars and hoped that the stars would give them God's instructions, they were soon called 'astrologers'. However, these practitioners also liked to gather on top of the Empire's tallest building, the White Tower, to look at the stars. That is why these practitioners were also known as the 'White Tower Magicians'.

After the Empire had won the second war against the northern Roland Continent, the status of the astrologers greatly improved. Many people gradually started to believe in the crazy words of these astrologers. Although they were still considered crazy, their words often came true. These words were soon known as 'prophecies'.

However, there was a great change in the Empire during the later years of Abbas the Great.

It was during the later years of Abbas the Great when both the Duke of Tulip and Dandong who had helped him conquer the continent had passed away. It was said that Abbas the Great also had an astrologer in the palace. One day, the astrologer and Abbas the Great had a long talk at night. Nobody knew what was said, but the astrologer's words had greatly angered the greatest Emperor of the Empire, and his head was immediately chopped off personally by the Emperor. When morning came, the palace maids saw the head on the floor and almost fainted in fear. Abbas the Great was still there, lost in thoughts, sitting in the pool of blood.

Three days later, Abbas the Great declared that all the astrologers in the Empire were rebellious. At the same time, he somehow managed to reach an agreement with the Pope, and the next day, the astrologers were declared as heretics. Almost all of the astrologers were massacred by the Empire's soldiers and religious law enforcers.

For a full a month, people were killed or burned at the religious stake every day. During that time, some people were hanged to death daily. Almost all of the records by the astrologers were also seized and burned. It was as if Abbas the Great had gone mad. Not only did he execute all the astrologers, but even those that opposed these commands were executed.

Finally, Abbas the Great ordered a prohibition. "In the future of the Empire, there will be no astrologers, and there will be no prophecy. All heretics will be burned to death!"

Facts had proven that a lot of things were very fragile in the face of the Imperial sovereignty. After a few years, there were no more astrologers in the Empire. After the lunatics had disappeared, there was nobody left to make any crazy prophecy.

The Empire then strived to suppress public opinion by prohibiting the people from discussing this. Abbas the Great had also burned all the records of the astrologers and their practicing methods. As a result, no one practiced as astrologers anymore in the Empire. Now, after two hundred years, the word 'astrologer' was forgotten by the people. Nobody mentioned the word 'prophecy' anymore. Any magician that spoke of prophecies was treated like a plague and would immediately be killed.

“Do you know what that palace astrologer had said to Abbas the Great? What kind of terrifying prophecy was it?” Rody could not help but asked Andy.

Andy sank and said, “How do I know? However, it is clear that what the astrologer said to Abbas the Great was not good! Even though all the astrologers were talented people, they did not know how to use their brains! They did not know what they could say and what they could not say. The prophecy from today as well... If this prophecy was said during that time, Abbas the Great would have definitely destroyed the tribe!”

Rody remained silent. The prophecy stated by Wuya constantly weighed on his mind. He sighed and then spoke out, “Alright. Let's sleep! We will meet with the other mountain people tomorrow!”

In the middle of the night, Rody was lying down on a wooden bench when he suddenly felt cold. He turned over and got up. As he sat on the wooden bench, he felt his neck turn cold. He could not help but reach for the sword at his side.

It was quiet and dark in the wooden house. However, there was a window, allowing the stars of the night sky to brighten up the inside of the house. Rody's eyes looked around and did not see

anything abnormal. However, the uneasiness in his heart continued to grow. He could not help it; he got up and walked to the window.

Wuya had ordered the mountain people to prepare this house on this high terrain. The house was built on a tall wooden platform and the situation in the valley could be seen from the windows.

At night, the noisy people of the Flame Tribe have quietened down. Occasionally, a few people were walking about. The straw sandals they wore made little sound.

Rody sighed and secretly ridiculed himself for feeling odd for no reason. Shaking his head, he went back to lie down on the wooden bench.

Something is wrong!

Rody felt a bone-piercing chill crawling up his back. That feeling made the hairs on his skin stand. He subconsciously lowered his hand and then heard a cracking sound. The wooden bench had split into two.

“Who...” Rody, half kneeling, held the sword in front of his chest vigilantly. Had he not evaded quickly enough, his head would have already been rolling on the floor.

The surrounding was still quiet and Rody's heart was racing. The attack suddenly came from the left. The wind swooshed and a cut appeared on his clothes. Rody had also sidestepped to avoid the sword. But this time, Rody's skin was also cut. His blood was dripping. There was a neat cut on his clothes. It seemed that the sword was very sharp.

“Who is this?!” Rody cried out in a soft voice. He then kicked the wooden bench to the side and rushed to the wall. He looked at the surroundings as he placed his back against the wall.

Sh*t! What happened? The other guy is invisible?

Chapter 114: ‘True God’ Kara

The house seemed extremely quiet and calm. In the house, Rody shouted loudly for Randt several times. However, there was no reply from the outside.

“Bastard!” Rody cursed and his heart sank. It was possible that Randt was already dead.

In the dark, Rody again felt a strong wind in front of him. He quickly raised his sword in front of his face. He then heard the sound of metal clashing. After that, Rody felt a heavy force hit his chest, and he tumbled to the floor.

Without having the time to panic, he immediately got up from the ground and looked around as he gritted his teeth.

“Andy! What’s going on?” Rody desperately asked the skeleton.

“An invisibility spell! A strange invisibility spell!” Andy hastily and loudly replied, “I cannot see him with my see-through spell! You must be careful!”

“Careful my ass!” Rody could not help but curse. How was he supposed to fight something he could not see? He was worried about Randt’s safety and continued to shout. However, it remained completely quiet outside of the house, and there was not a single reply. Rody was secretly surprised. There was the sound of fighting, and he had also repeatedly shouted. This should have already alerted the mountain people outside. Yet somehow, nobody came to check up on him.

Is Wuya trying to kill me? Rody’s mind was struck by this idea and then denied it. This was Wuya’s territory. If Wuya had the intention of killing him, he would not be able to escape. Wuya would not need to use this kind of sneaky approach.

He quickly thought of a solution as he vigilantly looked around. Since his opponent was invisible, he listened attentively.

Feeling another cold wind rush, Rody gritted his teeth and his sword suddenly burst into a pale golden light. Rody quickly gathered his fighting energy. His whole body was wrapped in a pale golden flame as he rushed forward. He heard the sound of metal clash again as his move succeeded. However, before he could take any further actions, he felt a sharp pain in his chest. After being ferociously hit, Rody grunted. He moved backwards, again and again, groaning softly. The blood in his chest had started to churn and had gathered in his throat.

Rody gritted his teeth so that he would not cough out blood. He then knelt down and closed his eyes as he could not see his opponent anyway. He listened carefully as he relied on his outstanding response ability that he had acquired when he trained with Instructor Carter.

When he heard a faint sound from the right, Rody suddenly opened his eyes. He slashed before his opponent could sneak up on him. The sound of metal clashed as Rody's sword was blocked. At the same time, Rody opened his mouth and spat out the blood. He heard a cry as the blood slammed to a stop in midair and revealed the face of a suspicious person.

"Hmph! Let's see if you can still run!" Rody shouted angrily. Now that he could see his opponent, Rody's reactions were faster. Rody struck consecutively and pushed back his opponent. He could hear the sound of metal clashing as he attacked. After that, he heard the sound of metal breaking as a section of a dagger dropped to the ground and revealed its shape.

Rody shouted. The longsword in his hand transformed into a golden flame as he slashed downwards. The man had tried to block with the remainder of his weapons only for it to fly out of his hands. That man spat out a mouthful of blood and his body staggered back a few steps. Rody placed the sword at the man's neck and ordered, "Kneel!"

Suddenly Rody felt a cold and sharp pain at the back of his neck.

He then heard a cold husky voice coming from behind him. “You kneel!”

The voice sounded indifferent, but it was in the language of the Empire.

There were two of them! He placed his sword closer to the man’s neck and coldly demanded. “Put down your sword, or I will kill your companion first!”

The cold voice behind him replied, “Go ahead! Since we are here, we have already prepared to throw away our lives!”

Rody secretly applied more strength into his sword. The sharp blade cut the person in front of him, and the blood that flowed out gradually revealed more of that person’s body. That person grunted silently.

After that, Rody felt a pain in his neck as he felt the other person behind him cut a little more into his skin. That voice repeated coldly, “If you do not kneel, I will cut your head.”

Rody sighed and slowly let go of the sword in his hand. After that, he slowly knelt down with one knee.

The man in front of Rody then picked up Rody’s sword and placed it at Rody’s neck.

Rody closed his eyes and coldly asked, “Who are you?”

The voice behind him said, “Duke of Tulip. We came here to discuss something with you!”

“Discuss?” Rody sneered. “If I had not avoided the first attack quickly enough, my head would have long been chopped off already!” He paused for a moment and then asked, “What about my guard? Have you killed him?”

“No,” The voice replied calmly. “We came here to discuss things with you. How could we kill your men? He is still resting next door. We did not do anything to him!”

He paused for a moment and noticed that Rody was puzzled. He then explained. “We have already isolated the sound from your room. The people outside would not be able to hear our fight! There is no point calling for help!”

Rody felt relieved and coldly asked, “Alright. What do you want?”

The voice behind him was still cold but this time, it revealed a hint of agitation. “Duke. I want you to help us eliminate Wuya!”

“What a joke!” Rody cut him off. “Eliminate Wuya? How can I even help you? How am I supposed to eliminate Wuya?”

The voice behind him did not care about Rody’s flat refusal and continued. “If you help us, I promise you that the mountain people will pledge allegiance to the Empire, forever.

Rody’s heart stirred as he asked again, “Who are you really?”

“Can you promise us that or not?” The voice snapped back.

Rody laughed. “Are you a child? Do you think that this is something that can be settled with a few words?”

The voice ferociously replied, “Be a man. Decide whether you will agree or you will not agree! There is no need for so many words! If you do not promise us this, I will cut off your head!”

Rody could not help but coldly said, “Inexplicable!” He suddenly thought of an idea and bravely tested it out. “No wonder Wuya extinguished your tribe!”

“What!” The man behind Rody cried out. His voice became louder and sharper. It no longer sounded as hoarse as before. Rody noted that the voice sounded familiar.

“What did you say?” The man’s voice sank. “I dare you to say it again!”

Rody was sure that his guess was correct. He purposefully replied coldly, “I said that your methods are too foolish! No wonder Wuya

was able to eliminate your tribe!”

Rody could feel the sharp sword at his neck tremble. He smiled and continued, “It is good that your hands are still stable. The two of you have swords placed at my neck. If you tremble too much, my head would be sliced off.”

The person behind ignored Rody’s remark and coldly asked, “You... How did you know?”

Rody snorted and replied, “If you want to beg me you need to show some sincerity! I am the Empire’s Duke of Tulip! Have you ever heard of anyone coercing the Duke of Tulip?”

The person behind Rody stayed silent as he thought to himself for a moment. After a while, he finally sighed and slowly said, “It is our mistake. However, you must not turn around. Otherwise...” After saying that, the person behind him took the sword away from Rody’s neck. Rody felt secretly relieved as he looked at the person in front of him. That person looked back at Rody for a moment before removing the sword.

Rody stood up and patted off the dust from his body. He then coldly demanded, “Give me the sword!”

The man was surprised and looked behind Rody inquiringly. The person that was behind Rody then coldly said, “Give it to him.” After that, the man no longer hesitated to return Rody’s sword.

“Alright. Duke. Can we start the negotiations now?”

Rody thought for a moment and then replied, “Fine. Speak.”

A sigh came from behind before saying, “Duke. We are from the Silvermoon Clan.”

Rody felt that he had heard of the similar name ‘Silver Moon Tribe’ before. After that, he remembered that he heard of it being mentioned by Wuyu when Wuyu was telling him about how powerful their Chief was. He remembered that the Chief had supposedly used a terrifying spell to destroy a tribe. That tribe’s

name was 'Silvermoon'.

"Alright. Now please tell me what you want." Rody's tone of voice was not friendly.

The man then slowly said, "Duke. You probably do not know that... there is a fundamental difference between our Silvermoon Clan and the other mountain people." He paused and seemed to hesitate for a moment before revealing a surprising fact to Rody. "Our Silvermoon Clan are not really mountain people."

"What?"

"We are not mountain people." The voice sounded a bit sad. "The people of the Silvermoon Clan are just a group of people that have lost their homes over a thousand years ago and are lost and drifting around."

"Please elaborate ..." Rody replied. He thought that it was strange as there had never been news of foreigners living in the mountains.

The man behind Rody slowly continued. "Duke. Have you heard of the 'Mythical War' that happened a thousand years ago?"

These words surprised Rody. He could not help but blurted out. "Are you talking about the 'God and Devil War'?"

"'God and Devil War?'" The man sneered. After that he slowly said. "That name is really just like that shameless fellow. God and Devils? Hahaha."

Rody's mind started to buzz as he remembered about that day with Mouse. He remembered that Mouse had accidentally spoken about the war one thousand years ago before closing her mouth and refusing to say anything more. It was as if saying anything about the war was prohibited.

Rody was confused as he replied, "Please elaborate more."

The man collected himself and slowly continued. "We, the people

of the Silvermoon Clan, are not mountain people. We are just survivors from that war. It is just that we escaped to the mountains and integrated with the mountain people after a thousand years. That is why we are also seen as mountain people.”

“What happened after that?”

That person suddenly became very serious and replied, “According to the ancient legends of our tribe, the war a thousand years ago had almost destroyed everything. Countless races became extinct in the war. Our tribe that initially lived on the continent was destroyed.”

“Wait!” Rody stopped him and asked, “What are you saying? Are you saying that you are all people of the Radiant Continent before being destroyed?”

“Yes!” The man revealed a kind of pride as he replied, “Thousands of years ago, our clan were the masters of the continent! We have built a huge city and we were an extremely magnificent civilization. We had cities at the rivers, mountains and even the skies! The Kara clan had occupied this entire continent! We did it under the protection of the Almighty God ‘Kara’. Everything on the continent belongs to Kara and us! In our language, Kara means ‘silver moon’”.

The man became more excited as he spoke, and his voice became louder. His tone was also full of cherished memories and pride.

Rody became more and more frightened.

Kara?

The Kara clan?

Rody’s face had changed.

He knew the name Kara. In fact, there was nobody on the entire continent that did not know the name Kara.

Legends say that Kara was extremely powerful. It was born in the

heavens and was capable of destroying heaven and earth. It was capable of flattening the mountains and filling up the oceans. The lightning of the heavens was his servant and the flame of hell was his slave.

The name Kara was recorded in all the religious books on the continent. Almost all the religious books spoke of Kara in an awe-inspiring manner. It was to the extent that even the most powerful magician would turn pale on hearing his name. All the churches also had murals of Kara.

The image of a mural from the church immediately appeared in Rody's mind.

In the picture, there were thick layers of clouds with Kara standing between heaven and earth. Kara's upper body was human while its lower body was the body of six different monsters. Kara held a silver sword in one hand and a giant flaming hammer in the other hand. His mournful howl seemed to fill the space between heaven and earth.

A spear stabbed into Kara's chest and the green blood flooded the Earth.

The first sentence of the 'Book of Creation', the church classic, stated that the Radiant God had killed the Devil. Its flesh and blood had turned into dust, and its heart was forever imprisoned in hell.

In the language of the Empire, Kara did not mean 'Silver Moon', but 'Devil'.

Rody cried out, "You are the Devil's clansmen?"

Chapter 115: Summit of Evil

“Devil? Devil?” The man spoke hatefully. “The Devil! Hah! If we are the Devils, are those guys Gods? Hahahaha... This is really just like them!”

His laughter suddenly stopped as his voice turned cold. "In the Radiant God's teachings, wasn't there something like the Five Great Sins of the Devil? Cruelty, greed, deceit, fear ... what else? Haha... in the end, who is the Devil? How many 'heathens' have been burned at the stake every day? Is that not cruelty? Who collected so much of the so-called 'atonement tax'? What is so good about 'atonement tax'? How many ordinary civilians have lost their last piece of bread or coin from this? Meanwhile, the so-called 'servants of God' in carriages and wear silk clothing. They live in the largest houses and have lots of gold coins in their pockets! Is that not greed? There is also deceit! The so-called scriptures made them look like honest and merciful servants of God but they bully and oppress the populace. They even describe themselves as charitable and merciful. Is that not deceit? After that, there is fear..."

“Enough! Don’t speak anymore!” Rody spoke out helplessly. He faintly knew that this person was right, and he was also unable to refute his claims.

The man laughed and asked, “Duke, is there anything else you want to know?”

Rody thought for a moment and asked in a soft voice, “That ‘God and Devil’ war... what happened at that time?”

There was a moment of silence before the voice slowly said, “I do not know much. There are a lot of things that only the tribe elders would know. To begin with, these things have nothing to do with you. How about we discuss your cooperation?”

“Speak. What do you want?”

“We, the Silvermoon Clan, have already been in the mountains for thousands of years. We have been here longer than the history of the mountain people! However, we did not deal much with the others. The mission left to us by our ancestors are to survive in the mountains and wait for the revival of the True God Kara! The rise of the mountain tribes has caused us to lose our tranquility. A lot of things have changed in the past thousand years. Outsiders have all also started to consider us as the people of the mountains. Even the mountain people thought of us as one of the largest tribes! All this while, our Silvermoon Clan has guided the mountain people forward. We are the ones who made them strong... that is... until the emergence of this Wuya!”

Rody laughed and replied. “I understand now. You consider yourselves the servants of Kara and are more noble than the people of the mountains. That is why you consider the mountain people your servants. However, a wise person has suddenly appeared and the servants no longer listen to you. Am I right?”

Rody’s words were so impolite that the person behind him became speechless. After some time, he fiercely said, “Duke! Please do not forget! We are the only people who can help the Empire right now! If you wait for Wuya to unify the people of the mountains, there will be a second Great Moon Kingdom!”

Rody just shrugged and thought to himself. That is unlikely.

After speaking for a long time with Wuya, he believed that Wuya was not an ambitious person. There was also the prophecy that was weighing down on his mind.

“Wuya does not seem to have that ambition stated by you,” Rody carefully replied.

“Duke. You may think that the mountain people do not need to be feared. You may think that Wuya does not have the ambition... but what about the future? What about after Wuya’s death? The mountain people would be united under the rule of Wuya.

However, would they be satisfied with being confined to within the mountain regions after ten to twenty years?”

Rody laughed and retorted, “Alright. In that case, would there be no threat if the mountains are left in your hands? After you control the mountains, would you be satisfied being confined to the mountains? Do you not want to leave the mountains and restore your former glory as Kara’s clansmen?”

“We will not!”

“What?”

A soft sigh came from behind before the man repeated, “I said we will not!”

Rody smiled and did not speak.

The man lightly say, “If you do not believe us, we can swear in the name of Kara!”

Rody laughed and answered, “Swear? Let me tell you. I do not believe in Gods. Much less the Devil!”

The man was silent and hesitated for a moment. He soon made up his mind and said, “Alright! We will not leave the mountains! This is because the Silvermoon Clan has our own mission!” The man took a deep breath before speaking in a dignified manner. “Our mission is to follow the will of the True God Kara, to defend against the Summit of Evil.”

“What? What do you mean by the Summit of Evil?”

The man chuckled before he replied, “That is the canyon you saw on the way here.”

Rody’s mind sank as he remembered the feeling when he stood at the entrance of the canyon, like a cold knife stabbing into his heart. He could not help but shiver as he murmured, “Summit of Evil? That is an interesting name.”

The man said again, “You are the Empire’s Duke of Tulip! As long

as you can support our Silvermoon Clan, we are willing to ally ourselves with you! As long as you can help us defeat the Flame Tribe and Wuya, we will abide by our promise! The mountain people will no longer leave the mountains!”

Rody felt strange as he heard these words.

When he was on the way to the mountains, he had thought of methods to make the mountain people yield and stop their rebellion. However, after he arrived, things had developed beyond his expectations. The biggest problem was solved with little effort. Whether it was Wuya who was initially thought of as ambitious or the Silvermoon Clan, they both promised that the mountain people would not leave the mountains.

The biggest problem was actually so easily solved?

As Rody thought to himself, he suddenly remembered something and asked, “How many people does the Silvermoon Clan have? I heard that during the battle with the Flame Tribe, Wuya had exterminated you all on his own.”

The man sneered and replied, “Our Silvermoon Clan is the largest tribe in the mountains. We have four large villages, with a total of 150,000 people! Wuya had destroyed one of our villages and killed one of our Elders, together with over 30,000 people! The whole of the Silvermoon Clan had sworn in the name of Kara to kill Wuya!”

“Kill?” Rody could not help but coldly replied, “Although I have not seen Wuya’s power first hand, I heard that he was capable of destroying an entire village on his own.”

A breeze came from behind as the man waved his sword. He then spoke emphatically, “Kara’s people cannot be insulted! Even if are down to the last men, we will kill Wuya!” He then took a deep breath as he tried to calm down and spoke, “We also know right now that Wuya is seriously injured and does not have much strength!”

“Oh?”

“Yes. We dispatched a few people who were the most remarkable at concealment to try and assassinate Wuya! Although they all had failed, one of them returned with news that Wuya is currently very weak!”

Rody nodded and thought to himself. No wonder there is news of Wuya being seriously injured by an assassin. The news of the assassination is true, but the injury was not the result of the assassination.

Thinking for a moment, Rody replied, “I cannot promise you such an important thing right now. I still need to negotiate with your leaders.”

The man behind him also agreed. “We also do not expect the Duke to immediately promise us tonight. We just hope that you will not immediately agree to cooperate with Wuya! We will send someone to contact you.”

Rody coldly replied, “Good. I assume that if I intended to cooperate with Wuya, you would not allow me to leave this room alive.”

The man laughed. “Is the Duke still dissatisfied about what happened earlier? We were just testing your strength so that we know we are making a strong alliance!”

After a moment of silence, the man who was standing in front of Rody disappeared in a burst of light along with the blood on his face. Rody then turned around to look behind him. It was empty and did not show signs of any shadow.

The two people of the Silvermoon Clan were like ghosts. They came and went without a trace, leaving behind Rody alone in the room.

Rody felt physically exhausted. He had suffered two consecutive blows and even vomited blood from the earlier fight. In fact, it was

not a light injury. After that, he had kept a calm face as he talked to the man and at the same time forcefully suppressed showing his own injuries. Once the two men had left, he felt his stomach roll about, and relaxing the control on his body, he sank to sit on the ground.

At dawn, Wuya had dispatched two mountain women to serve Rody. The two of them had entered Rody's room and saw Rody sprawled on the ground, asleep. The room was a mess and the wooden bench was broken. Traces of battle could be seen in the room.

Rody woke and jumped up. He laughingly said, "Do not be surprised. I am accustomed to fighting people in my dreams."

The two mountain women then saw his wounds and the blood on his clothes before screaming...

That day, Wuya introduced Rody to the other tribal leaders. These leaders more or less glared at Rody with hostility. Rody secretly thought of the words of the Silvermoon Clan. Although Wuya did not have any ambition, he would not remain as the Tribal Chief of the Mountain Tribes forever. He was only a single person and would die in the future. The mountain people who hated the Empire would eventually rebel. On the other hand, the Silvermoon Clan was different. As long as the Silvermoon Clan survived, they would be able to control the mountains...

As Rody thought about it, he could not help but look at Wuya. He saw Wuya's pale face and cold expression as Wuya calmly looked at the people present. Rody suddenly remembered and cursed in his heart. Wuya is able to read minds, and it would be impossible to hide what happened last night from him. He would know what I think just by looking at me. This is extremely bad!

The other tribes were noisy as they made a big fuss. Some thumped their chests, some stomped their feet, and some just glared angrily at Rody and Randt. The words shouted were

probably not very good or polite words. However, Rody could not understand them and decided to ignore them.

Wuya coldly looked at the restless tribal leaders and stood up. All of them immediately turned quiet the moment they saw their Tribal Chief stand up and looked up towards him.

Wuya's tone was cold and detached as he spoke something in the language of the mountain people.

Beside Rody was the mountain warrior Wuyu. Wuyu had been ordered by Wuya to be a translator for Rody.

“Everybody quiet down!”

“Since I am the Tribal Chief, you all must listen to me!”

“This is the Empire's Duke of Tulip, the Empire's most powerful warrior! His presence here is not to declare war against us but to negotiate for peace!”

“I know that some of you do not want to negotiate for peace! Some of you insist on fighting the Empire and attacking the Purple Leaf City! I also know that some of you do things behind my back. You secretly contacted the people outside the mountains and incited the mountain soldiers to revolt! I also know who is the culprit! When I became the Tribal Chief, everybody had vowed to obey my orders! Now, someone had betrayed me! This person must be punished!”

There was an uproar as a few old men stood up and shouted loudly. They probably did not say any good words, and Wuyu also did not translate it for Rody.

Wuya coldly asked them, “Do the few of you want to become a newly elected Tribal Chief? That is fine! As long as someone is able to defeat me, I will let that person become Tribal Chief.”

The angry old men immediately stopped shouting. They glared at each other with displeased expressions.

One of them seemed more intelligent and argued. Wuyu interpreted his words for Rody. “He said that the land outside was originally a part of our mountain. However, that land was stolen from us hundreds of years ago. Now that the mountain people have united, we must take back our land. Even the Tribal Chief should not object, otherwise, that person is unworthy to be the Tribal Chief.”

Rody snorted coldly.

Wuya gave Rody a glance and smiled as he continued, “You said that I am unworthy to be the Tribal Chief. In that case, tell me. Who is worthy of being the Tribal Chief?”

Although Wuya was smiling, his eyes were cold and there was an invisible presence coming out of his body. The presence was filled with murderous aura. One of the few people that stood in objection could not help but sit down.

Wuya slowly repeated, “Now the mountain people have elected me as Chief. That means that my words are orders! If I say fight, then fight! If I say to make peace, then make peace! Those that intend to object will need to ask the sharp end of the Flame Tribe’s spear!”

Rody sighed. He realized that negotiating with the mountain people did not require tact, grace, or strategy. You could only work from a position of strength. Only the strong will dominate.

When a few of the people who had objected started to cool down and to back down, one of them suddenly shouted loudly. Wuyu once again translated the contents to Rody. “He said that the Tribal Chief is bluffing. He said that the Chief had been seriously injured and that they do not need to be afraid of him. He then asked for the re-election of Tribal Chief so that the strongest of them could lead the mountain people.” Wuyu paused for a moment before cursing, “This old shithead!”

Andy suddenly sneered in Rody mind and said, “This fellow is

doomed!”

Rody also nodded and thought that according to Andy’s words, Wuya was definitely as powerful or even more powerful compared to the Black Veil Saint, Mouse. With this kind of strength, it would be impossible for any of the mountain people to defeat him.

Wuya’s face sank and became furious. He then said, “Alright! You can oppose me as the Tribal Chief. In that case, go back to your tribe and prepare for battle.”

The person who called for the re-election immediately walked to the entrance. He looked back at his two partners and loudly shouted a few words. However, the two of them seemed to hesitate as they felt fear when they thought of Wuya’s strength. The man standing at the entrance spat ferociously before walking out.

The other tribes also looked at each other in dismay. When they saw the angry Tribal Chief, they lowered their heads.

Rody looked at the crowd and suddenly realized.

Wuya is using me!

If it was in accordance with Wuya's words that Wuya had no ambition for the outside land, there would be no need for a peace discussion. If he did not leave the mountains, the Empire would also be unable to catch him! However, he purposefully looked for Rody to have a peace discussion so that he could rein in the other tribal leaders that oppose him. He then took the opportunity to eliminate the other tribes that opposed him.

When Rody thought of this, he looked at Wuya with a surprised expression.

Andy’s voice slowly rang in his head. “Boy. It looks like you finally understand. You must understand that a person in a high position needs more than just individual strength! This Wuya can be considered to be an excellent leader! If the Silvermoon Clan was not here, Wuya would be able to conquer the mountains much

more easily.”

Rody started to have a strange feeling. He then noticed that Wuya was looking at him. Wuya’s eyes were fixed on Rody’s face, and then he smiled.

Chapter 116: Wuya's Secret

The various tribes did not dare to oppose Wuya. However, they still looked at Rody with hostility, which made Rody feel uncomfortable.

At noon, they held a banquet as a show of hospitality to the guests, according to the customs of the mountain people. Numerous exotic dishes were served at the largest open space in the valley.

Although the mountains had an abundance of food, the cooking style of the mountain people was simple. No matter what game they caught, it was just roasted and then sprinkled with exotic spices. Rody ate for a short while and then noticed that a few of the people from the other tribes were looking at him with hostility. As expected, they later approached Rody carrying a large bottle of wine.

Since the Tribal Chief did not allow them to make trouble for the two people of the Empire, they intended to get them drunk instead.

The mountain women played a rhythmic tune with all kinds of strange, locally made, percussion instruments. There were also mountain people that wore fur clothing. They were at the center of the valley and were dancing in circles while holding each other's hands. Some of them had roasted deer legs in their hands, others had wine bottles. Everyone was drunk and jolly.

Rody was watching these people shouting and hollering. He gave a wry smile as he looked towards Wuya. However, he found that the Chief Wuya had already left some time ago.

Rody sighed and pushed Randt away. Rody had been sitting at the side as he enjoyed the peculiar dance of the mountain people. On the other hand, Randt had a huge body and an outstanding capacity for alcohol. He only shook a little after drinking a dozen

bottles of wine but was still calm and sober. Rody was surprised. He had also tasted the wine brewed by the mountain people. The wine tasted sour, bitter and peppery. It was extremely difficult to drink.

With nothing to do, Rody quietly left his seat and took advantage of the chaos to walk away.

None of the mountain people were alerted because they were busy enjoying the banquet. The other places in the village had very few people. But they constantly pointed at Rody because of his foreign appearance.

Rody unknowingly walked towards the houses with chimneys. He then heard some clanking sound coming from inside. Feeling curious at how the mountain people make their weapons, Rody could not help but walk inside.

The building has large doors and windows for ventilation. However, Rody still felt a rush of heat waves when he walked in.

There were no lamps in the room, but there was a huge burning stove in the middle of the room, constantly spewing out hot flames. He could see many half-naked men working with hammers and many different kinds of tongs. There were also some crudely crafted weapons at the side, ready for further remolding.

Rody smiled and felt that there were no differences between the blacksmiths of the Empire and the blacksmiths of the mountain people.

A few of them saw him but returned to their work without giving any strange reaction. One of them put down his hammer and walked over. He looked at Rody and shouted in the language of the Empire. "You. Weapons. Want?"

Rody froze for a moment before asking, "You know how to speak our language?"

The man loudly replied, "Sometimes, I buy things, go to your

place, learn!" After he finished speaking he smiled, revealing his yellow teeth.

Rody had never met such friendly mountain people since entering the mountains. The other mountain people had always looked at Rody with hostility. However, the mountain blacksmith seemed to treat Rody kindly. Rody was impressed.

Rody returned a smile and casually picked up a long sword from a shelf. He then looked at the blacksmith inquiringly.

The blacksmith laughed loudly and replied, "This, good sword! You want, two wolf pelts!"

Rody nodded. He knew that the mountain people were behind the times and still used the barter system. There was no such thing as money.

Rody brandished the sword and looked at its sharp edges. He saw that the edges were really sharp and smiled. "Your weapons are not bad!"

The blacksmith immediately looked proud and said, "Mountain, best iron ore! Purple Leaf City's iron ore, is bought from us. Not the best!"

Rody looked at the weapon and asked, "Are there any other weapons?" He paused for a moment before continuing. "Better ones?"

The blacksmith smiled and replied, "Yes. Prepared for strong and mighty warriors."

The blacksmith took Rody into an adjacent wooden house. There was nobody else in that house. Rody then saw some longbows on the shelf. Rody picked one up to test it. Rody also picked up a strange-looking dagger. He then smiled and asked, "Do your people use swords?"

"Sold to outsiders." The blacksmith took the dagger from Rody's hands and then took a piece of wood from a corner of the room. He

then chopped the wood with the dagger, and the wood split into two easily. After that, he returned the dagger to Rody.

Rody was filled with admiration as he looked at the sharp edge of the blade. A cold air seemed to come from the bluish blade. Rody waved it a little and found that its size and weight was comfortable. Rody liked it and smiled. “I want this. How much is it?” he asked.

After that, Rody took out a few gold coins from a small bag.

Rody then saw that the blacksmith shook his head and smiled. Rody then gasped and smiled. “Do you not want gold coins? I don’t have any pelts to give you right now.”

The blacksmith then approached Rody and said, “If the Duke likes this sword, I will give it to you.”

“What?” Rody was surprised as he exclaimed, “For me? You know who I am?”

The blacksmith then smiled and whispered, “I am General Camus’ man.”

Rody was shocked and immediately looked at the door. He saw that there was nobody outside the door and then he looked back and whispered, “What did you say?”

The blacksmith replied, “Duke. I am one of General Camus’ subordinates. I am here specially to transmit information to the General!”

Rody took a deep breath and asked, “You... are you a mountain person?”

The blacksmith whispered, “I have the lineage of the mountain people. However, the General was the one that raised me from a young age. A few years ago, the General sent me into the mountains to mingle with the tribe.”

Rody felt uncertain and asked, “Wouldn’t anyone doubt you?”

The blacksmith smiled and replied, "In the past few years, Wuya had merged many different tribes. The current Flame Tribe also had many people from other tribes. That is why I am not afraid of being suspected."

Rody nodded, and the blacksmith whispered again, "Duke. The General has given me instructions to speak with you when you are here. However, it is not convenient to speak here. I also cannot have too much contact with you. Take this. This is the information I discreetly obtained the two evenings ago." The blacksmith then gave Rody a wooden tube and continued, "This is Wuya's secret. Go back and study it carefully."

"Wuya's secret?" Rody was shocked.

The blacksmith then spoke softly and said, "Wuya suddenly became weak a few days ago. Apparently, he was severely injured by an assassin. I have already informed the General. However, these days I noticed that he would go to the shaman every three nights as if he had to rely on the shaman to help him. During treatment, he is unable to take care of other things. I took the opportunity two nights ago to sneak into Wuya's room and found something..."

Rody's expression changed as he asked, "You sneaked in?"

The blacksmith showed a proud expression and replied, "I was raised and trained by the General! Wuya's guards did not notice me at all!"

After that, there was the sound of footsteps outside and the blacksmith expression changed. He whispered, "Someone is coming! Keep this properly!" He then deliberately spoke loudly. "We have good things in here! If you don't believe it, you can try!"

Two mountain warriors then opened the door and entered. Their faces showed that they were drunk. They shouted a few words towards the blacksmith. The blacksmith also laughed and replied. Their expressions changed when they saw Rody. That expression

turned into disdain when they saw the dagger in Rody's hands. Rody also did not speak and walked out. One of the warriors behind Rody then scornfully spat in his direction. If the Tribal Chief did not give the order, they would have already caused trouble for Rody.

Rody returned to the banquet. Although he was worried about the possible contents of the wooden tube, he knew that he couldn't act rashly in broad daylight. He patiently stayed on at the mountain people's carnival.

Several people from the other tribes were already intoxicated and some of them had taken off their shirts and were wrestling each other. People at the sides were cheering for the wrestlers. Wuyu, who was supposed to help translate for Rody, was also shouting in a drunken state. He had not noticed that Rody had left and returned to the party.

Rody continued to drink for a while. The carnival that started in the afternoon had continued until the evening. Rody used the excuse of drinking too much to retire early.

He made Randt stand guard in front of the door while he sat in his room and opened up the wooden tube. Rody then took out a small piece of rolled up cloth from the tube. There was a strange pattern drawn on the cloth. Rody looked at it carefully and realized that it was a map of Wuya's room.

The map showed the positions of the guards, the entrance and also the door to the room. On top of the map were wavy thick lines pointing to the top. After that, there was a circle boldly outlined.

Rody also had doubts in his mind as he tried to recall Wuya's room.

Wuya, as the Elder of the Tribe, lived in the largest building in the village. On top of that, he lived in the highest location on a tall wooden platform, allowing him to look down at most of the village.

The platform leaned against the walls of the mountain in its construction. The house was constructed in the same way. Rody compared this image with the drawing in his hands. He realized that following in the direction of the thick lines, the circle was located behind the wall on the map.

“What is this?” He could not help but murmur.

Andy laughed in his mind. “What else could it be? It is most likely a secret entrance!”

Rody shook his head and replied, “So, what if it is a secret entrance? Where does this entrance lead to? Should we go and investigate this? The current situation is uncertain. If we are too hasty, we may offend Wuya, and that is a bad idea.”

The two of them discussed for a while, but Rody could not come to a conclusion. He then went to sleep in low spirits.

The next morning, the various tribes once again had a meeting with Wuya. Rody, as the Duke of the Empire, would naturally need to attend. The mountain people started to become noisy again. Rody understood that Wuya needed him to prevent the other mountain people from attacking. Rody felt exploited by Wuya, but he needed to play his part for the ‘peace negotiations’.

Rody looked at Wuya, dressed in white, sitting quietly on the platform looking pale and white like jade. Rody thought that Wuya looked strange. He seemed different from two days ago. Rody felt that there was something different about Wuya, but he could not tell what.

While he was thinking to himself, Andy suddenly shouted in his mind, “I know! He seems to have become... older!”

“Hm?” Rody once again looked at Wuya and saw that he really looked a bit different.

If Wuya looked like a thirty-year-old man two days ago, the Wuya yesterday would look like a 34 or 35-year-old man. The Wuya in

front right now looked like he had aged another two to three years.

“He is growing old too quickly.” Andy’s voice sounded a bit strange. “No wonder I always thought that he looked weak.”

Rody then whispered to himself, “This must be something that happened when he entered the Death Canyon. He must also be visiting the shaman every three days because of this!”

Andy replied, “This is strange. I have never heard of any magic or sorcery that could make people age like this. Even when a sorcery causes people to age quickly, it is not as slowly as this. That sorcery would make the person age a few dozen years in a day.”

“Maybe he has a way to counteract the spell, or maybe it is not a spell that you know of...” Rody shook his head. He looked at Wuya again and saw that Wuya’s eyes were closed. It seemed that Wuya felt disdain towards the noisy and endless argument of the various tribes.”

Andy suddenly asked, “Boy. Something seems strange here. Should we give it our attention?”

Rody maintained his calm expression but secretly laughed. “Andy. Aren’t you usually the most curious one? Tonight, Wuya would go and see the shaman. We might as well go and see what are the secrets of the person the mountain people call their avatar.”

“Haha... you need to be careful. That night, you had fought against the two Silvermoon warriors. The lies you gave would only trick a child. Wuya would definitely know about it. If you want to take risks tonight, it is your choice. However, do not blame me if I do not save you.”

Chapter 117: Monster

Rody crouched and slowly snuggled to the pillars below the wooden platform to evade the mountain warriors.

It would be wrong to say that God was not helping him. That night, there was no moonlight, and not even a single star could not be seen. The only light came from the surrounding torches.

The two mountain warriors did not notice any changes. They only felt a gust of wind blow by. The flames on the torch flickered twice, but everything seemed normal.

Rody was holding the pillars that were supporting the wooden platform. He slowly climbed the pillars and occasionally looked at the two mountain warriors below him. His heart could not stop palpitating. If either one of the warriors decided to look up, they would immediately see him.

Rody climbed faster since he felt nervous. The wooden platform was about seven to eight meters high. When both of his hands reached the top of the wooden platform, he looked up to see the situation up there. He saw two mountain warriors guarding the entrance of Wuya's home. They held short spears in their hands and were alert. Rody sighed as he hanged onto the wooden platform with his hands. He slowly moved to the side of the platform. His movements were extremely slow as he was afraid of making noise. The wooden platform was big. Rody took almost an hour just to move from the front to the side. Even though Rody was strong, his arms started to ache. Seeing that there was nobody on the side of the platform, Rody quickly arced his body and jumped up. The wooden platform was old and had been under the sun and rain. As a result, when Rody landed on the platform, the wooden platform squeaked.

Rody felt tense and his body stiffened. He strained his ears for a long time before he heard the movements quieten. He then relaxed

and quickly tiptoed to the side of the building. He looked at the two warriors guarding the entrance from the side. Rody gave a wry smile as he wondered how the blacksmith could manage to secretly sneak in. Rody thought he would ask the blacksmith if he had the chance to.

Rody pondered for a moment. He then gathered his courage and tapped the walls of the building. The two guards heard the tapping sound and they looked at each other. One of them then took his short spear and walked to the side of the building. The moment he turned the corner, he felt a large hand grab his neck. He was unable to resist the person who forcefully pulled him towards the corner.

From the other side, the other mountain warrior heard his companion give a soft cry before turning silent. He could not help but call out to his companion. However, there was no response. Clenching his short spear, the warrior ran towards the back of the building. He then tripped over something on the floor. The guard stumbled forward and saw that he had tripped over his companion's short spear. While he tried to balance his body, he saw a hand holding the short spear. Just as he was about to call out, he felt a pain in his neck and fainted.

Rody sighed in relief and thought to himself. Lucky.

If the two warriors managed to shout more, they would have attracted more mountain warriors to come. However, it seemed that the mountain people were really simple minded. Rody looked at the two warriors that he had knocked out. Those few days, he was treated well by the mountain people. He was provided with good food and comfortable lodging. Wuya also did not treat him unfairly. Rody felt that it was not right to kill Wuya's men. He sidled along the wall until he arrived at the entrance. Gently pushing aside the gem curtain, he entered the building.

The copper stove in the middle of the house was still emitting a white mist. The room was dark, and there was no light anywhere.

Rody had been to the room twice in the last two days. Both times, he had felt that the room was weird but he could not tell what. This time, he had the blacksmith's map and now he could understand what was strange.

Rody slowly walked to the wooden shelves on the wall. After that, he followed the instructions in the map, and gently pushed away a small cabinet. He then grabbed and forcefully pulled a piece of concave wood from the wooden wall, revealing a dark hole in the wall.

As expected, according to the instructions on the map, except for the wall next to the mountain, the remaining three walls of that wooden house were hollow inside.

Rody carefully walked through the hole in the wall. The space between the walls was like a narrow channel. There was just enough space for a person to squeeze through. Rody groped his way forward in the dark. He turned a corner and walked a bit further. Soon, he touched a very large boulder in front of him. Rody knew that he had followed the hollow gap in between the wall and finally arrived at the back of the wooden house.

At that moment, he was standing at the side of the mountain wall. The surrounding space was also a little bit larger. Rody took a deep breath and smelled a kind of rotting matter. It was a very unpleasant smell. He forcefully pushed the boulder to no avail.

Rody knew that the blacksmith had found this place that day. However, he could not proceed further, so he had turned back. Rody was curious about the secret passage in Wuya's room. Rody felt around the wooden wall, but he could not find any crevices. He then closed his eyes and started to gather his fighting energy.

When Rody suddenly opened his eyes again his body emitted a pale golden 'Holy Light'. The flame seemed to wrap around his body and illuminated the dark space. In front of Rody was the mountain wall with a shape that looked like a circular hole. A tall

boulder was blocking the opening.

Rody stretched out his hands and placed them on the boulder. He exerted himself and slowly pushed the boulder. He then heard the sound of the boulder moving as he managed to create a small gap. Rody gasped for breath and after that, he pushed again to increase the size of the gap. He made sure that the gap was big enough for him to squeeze through. Rody withdrew his fighting energy. Right now, he was in a dangerous situation. He dared not rush because he was not sure whether Wuya had noticed his aura.

There was no light in the cave. In the first two steps, he could still see something. However, the further in he went, the darker it became. Rody could not even see his fingers when he stretched his hands.

As he felt his way through, he noticed that the walls were unusually moist. Evidently, the moisture was caused by water vapors. As Rody continued, he felt that the cave became more and more narrow. In the end, he was not able to stand up straight and was only able to crawl forward. He cursed Wuya and was thinking of retreating. However, he could not help but think. If Wuya could crawl pass this, why can't I?

Not knowing how long he had crawled, Rody felt his palms and knees stinging in pain. Presumably, Rody's pants also had holes in it. The cave was very strange. The cave occasionally led up, then down, sometimes left and sometimes right. Suddenly, there was a bright light in front of Rody. He was excited. He sped up and crawled to the exit. He moved too vigorously and only realized that the exit was on the edge of the mountain after his body was halfway out in midair. Rody was caught off guard and fell down. Fortunately, the hole in the mountain was not too high. It was only a drop of a few meters. Rody crashed onto the ground. He was injured from the fall, but he did not dare relax. He quickly turned over and jumped up.

Rody looked around and he was shocked.

He was clearly in an empty space, surrounded by mountains. The space had a perimeter of at least a few ten meters. It was as if he was in a bucket.

He looked up and saw that the walls became narrower towards the sky. As it got closer to the top, Rody could see the sky outside of the cave. The tunnel that Rody had just escaped from was about eight meters up on the walls of the mountain.

The ground was full of potholes and stones. However, the stones on the walls looked odd. The stones were a little bit transparent and seemed to glow. The light lit up the cave and made the surroundings clear.

The only way out was the huge pitch-dark hole on Rody's left. The wind started to blow as Rody composed himself. He then made a wry smile and commented, "This place is really scary."

Andy warned Rody in his mind, "Boy, you must be careful. I sense something strange here."

"What is strange?"

Andy's voice sounded uneasy. "Think about it. The channel in Wuya's room was so strange. He must have a big secret here. However, don't you think it was too easy for us to come in here? The boulder may have blocked the way but that boulder could only block an average person. Wuya's cave is so secretive which means there is obviously something important in here. How could people break in so easily? If it were me, I would have placed more defensive spells here. Besides that, there are only two ordinary warriors outside the house, guarding. From the channel up to here, have you encountered any guards obstructing the way?"

Rody nodded and agreed. "That makes sense." Rody looked back at the black hole on the left and he heard the sound a faint blowing wind from inside...

In the middle of the night, the wind that came out of the cave

made a ghastly sound. Those that heard the sound could not help but tremble. It seemed like the wind was crying.

Rody subconsciously took out the dagger given to him by the blacksmith and held it firmly in his hand. After that, he picked up a stone from the ground and threw hard into the cave.

“What are you doing?” Andy yelled.

“You don’t understand this?” Rody laughed. “There is a saying in Dandong’s ‘Sunflower Treasure’ that says [‘toss a stone to find out what’s ahead’](#). This is to test whether there is anything dangerous inside that cave or not.”

There was a clanking sound made by the stone thrown by Rody. The stone tumbled around and the sound slowly became softer.

Behind that cave was obviously a steep slope. When Rody heard the sound, he was dumbstruck, and the back of his neck felt cold. After hesitating for a moment, Rody picked up a handful of broken stones from the ground and held them in his hands. He walked in big strides toward the cave.

“Why do you pick up these stones?” Andy asked, “What is the purpose of such small stones?”

Rody laughed and replied, “I heard that there are many snakes in the caves of the mountains. If I were to encounter any snakes, I will throw these stones at them. Although the stones are small, but with my wrist strength, it is enough to crush their heads.”

Just when Rody was a few steps away from the entrance of the cave, he suddenly heard an earth-shaking roar from the cave. Rody was frightened and immediately turned around and ran back, even before Andy could shout “Quickly retreat!” Rody ran out to the side of the cave and vigilantly looked back at the cave.

He then heard crashing sounds coming from the entrance of the cave. It was as if something was causing the stones of the mountains to fall in succession. After that, there was a hissing roar

and suddenly, a triangular head appeared. A long red tongue came out and slammed into where Rody was hiding. Rody cried out and immediately jumped away. When Rody landed, he frantically rolled away, ignoring the pain he felt from rolling on the uneven rocks on the ground, scrambling and crawling until he reached the rock wall.

He was in time to see the large triangular head retreat.

“Just now... what kind of monster is that!” Rody could not help but exclaimed.

Andy’s voice was no longer smooth, “I did not see clearly...but... like...it was like...snake...”

There was another hissing roar as the whole cave start to tremble. A monster then came out from the cave.

Its body was as broad as the giant tree that Rody saw that needed several mountain people to hug it. It was covered in thick scales. The scales were all over the place. The stones on the mountain walls came crashing down. It was a giant snake.

That huge snake came out of the cave. It coiled the lower half of its body into a circle. The upper half of the snake’s body stood upright and its ten pairs of eyes emitted a green light as it looked at Rody.

Wait a minute... Ten pairs... Ten pairs of eyes?

Rody looked up at the snake and almost sat down on the ground.

That giant snake’s upper body was like a normal snake’s body. However, at the front, it separated into ten heads. Each head was triangular in shape and covered in thick crimson scales. Each head opened its mouth and its long tongue flicked about endlessly. Its hissing sound would chill one to the bones.

Rody could not retreat any further as he had already reached the edge of the mountain wall. He raised his head to look at the large, strange snake with many heads, in front of him. Rody’s mouth was

also wide open...

“This... what the hell is this monster!?” Rody could not help but shout. The hand holding the stones that were intended to ‘smash the snake’s head’ had loosened and the stones had dropped to the floor...

It was ridiculous to use those small stones to fight that huge guy in front... that big ‘snake’.

toss a stone to find out what’s ahead, 投石问路 (tóushíwènlù), is a literal translation for a Chinese proverb. It means ‘test the waters’.

Chapter 118: Gate of the Abyss

“Preposterous!” Andy shouted in Rody’s mind. “This is a Mythical Beast! What's the name... ‘[Jormungardr](#)’? Right, it is known as the [Fang of the Pit..](#) It is definitely not just any large snake!”

Rody shouted, “What ‘Jormungardr’? Stupid old skeleton! What did you say...” Before Rody could finish, he felt a sudden violent gust of wind coming in his direction as one of the snake’s head scurried forward. Rody hastily jumped out of the way and heard a loud rumbling sound. The snake fiercely lunged at the location Rody was just standing at and crashed the stones on the mountain wall into bits and pieces.

Before he could stand firmly after dodging, he heard the wind rushing on his left. He immediately started to roll in fear. Another head of the snake had ferociously punched into the ground and left a huge crack. The large snake slowly approached and caused many small stones to fall.

“Move back! Move back!” Andy shouted in Rody’s mind.

Rody was just about to open his mouth to refute Andy when Andy shouted again, “Shut up, kid! Keep quiet! Move back! This fellow is blind! He cannot see you! Do not make any sound!”

Rody immediately shut up. He supported himself on the wall of the mountains and retreated back to a corner of the cave.

After that, Rody saw the giant snake gradually uncoil its huge body and slowly moved around the cave. Its ten heads felt around to examine the surroundings. Occasionally, it bumped into a stone and caused it to fall.

“What in the world is this? What do you mean by ‘Jormungardr’?” Rody lowered his body and secretly asked Andy.

Andy’s voice sounded strange as it replied, “I heard of that during

the time I spent with my Master. Jormungandr, the Fang of the Pit. It is the legendary Mystic Dragon's ninth son, a high ranked Mythical Beast."

Rody saw that the giant snake was gradually coming closer. It had occupied at least half of the cave that had a hundred-meter radius. The whole cave seemed to shake. Rody could not help but asked, "Why is there a Mythical Beast on the Radiant Continent? Haven't they gone extinct during ancient times?"

"How the hell would I know?" Andy answered in annoyance and then warned Rody, "Be careful. Even though this thing is powerful, it is blind. As long as you do not make a single sound, it will not be able to find you."

"Blind?" Rody swallowed his saliva as he looked at the giant snake from a distance twisting its body all over, with its ten pairs of eyes emitting a green light. Are those terrifying eyes really blind?

Listening to Andy's words, Rody cautiously moved behind a rock. Just as he was feeling relieved, he heard Andy said, "Let me think of a way to deal with this thing. Hmm... those days, when Master went to the Roland Continent, he had encountered this kind of creatures. I heard that even though it was strong and could breathe out a strong fire, it should still have a weakness."

"Weakness? What weakness? Hmm... Wait a minute..." Rody suddenly turned stiff and gritted his teeth, "Did you just say that this... this creature... can breathe out fire?"

Before Rody could finish his words, he saw the huge snake had stopped twisting around. It had recoiled into a lump. Its ten heads stood up and every single head opened its mouth. From each mouth, the two-pointed tip of a snake's tongue could be seen. Suddenly, there was a loud sound bursting from the mouths of the snake. It was like the howling of a wild beast.

After that, one of the heads stretched out and shot out a wave of

red flame that was ten meters long.

Wherever the flame went, the stones were burnt black. Rody was so surprised that he almost fell onto the ground. Shit! This monster should only exist in storybooks! Why is it breathing flames right in front of me right now?

As one of the heads breathed out fire, the other heads also rose and started to breathe out fire.

Rody immediately felt the heat waves coming from the cave. More than ten flames were continuously wreaking havoc in the cave. The flames burned the stones in the cave until they were scalding hot. The snake continued to breathe out fire, and the flames gradually got closer to Rody. The flames were about to burn the location where Rody was standing.

Suddenly, one of the snake's heads appeared about ten steps in front of Rody. Its green eyes were right in front of Rody. Rody did not dare to breathe out and bravely withstood the hot flames. He firmly gripped the dagger in his hands.

As soon as a snake head open its mouth, Andy quickly shouted, "Quickly use your fighting energy!"

Sure enough, the snake gathered its power and flames shot out from its mouth. The flames shot straight to where Rody was hiding. Rody gritted his teeth, and his body was suddenly wrapped in a pale golden flame. He held his dagger and used his energy to form a shield large enough for himself. The flames clashed at the shield and immediately dispersed. Rody's body shook from the violent force, and his hair and eyebrows felt like they were singed.

Fortunately, the snake heads could not breathe fire for an extended amount of time. It stopped before attempting to breathe out fire elsewhere. Rody stopped his fighting energy. His heart was beating heavily, but Rody did not dare breathe.

After breathing out flames numerous times, the snake started to

get anxious. It started to toss about, and its heads started to slam against the mountain wall. It roared and slammed the mountain wall, leaving large cracks.

Suddenly, there was a cry of alarm. Although the sound was soft, Rody could hear it clearly as he was fully on the alert. That sound actually came from the entrance of the cave that Rody had climbed out earlier.

Someone is here! Rody was surprised.

However, the snake's reaction was faster than Rody. Before that person's cry of alarm had stopped, one of the snake's heads had already ferociously slammed against that entrance of the cave.

There was a loud sound when the entrance of the cave was slammed into. The originally small opening of the cave had become much larger. From a distance, Rody could see a black figure standing at that entrance and giving out another scream.

That giant snake was blind but its hearing was fine. One of its heads stretched and shot out its long tongue. The tongue curled up the victim's legs before biting its victim.

After that, there was a scream. The lower half of the person's body was caught in the snake's mouth and was being pulled out of the entrance. However, there was another person in the cave. That person held his companion tightly and desperately tried to pull his companion back.

The person that was bitten by the snake did not die immediately and continued to scream in fear. Fortunately, the snake's mouth only had two lower fangs and did not have any other teeth. Besides that, the mouth of the snake was too big in comparison to the man. Its two lower fangs did not sink into that man's body. Instead, the snake only closed its mouth on him and forcefully dragged him out of the cave.

The snake was extremely powerful, and the two people were

unable to withstand its pull. Not only did the snake swallow the victim that it was biting, it also managed to drag out the victim's companion to the entrance of the cave. He then fell down the mountain wall.

That snake was extremely fast. As soon as the man had landed on the ground, another snake head had already lunged forward. After that, there was a large explosion as the man quickly rolled out of its way, and a hole immediately appeared on the ground.

The figure pulled out a dagger, but Rody did not see him do anything. Suddenly, the whole person's shadow faded away.

When Rody saw that he immediately realized these people were from the Silvermoon Clan.

After the figure disappeared, Rody listened carefully and could still hear that man's light footsteps. On the other hand, the snake was more alert and plunged its head down at a spot. There was another sharp clash sound as it turned out to be an empty spot. Rody placed his head on the ground to listen more clearly, and then he heard a whacking sound. A figure immediately appeared. The snake had swung its head across and flung the man into the sky; he landed right in front of Rody.

The snake noticed the movements and turned two of its heads to look at Rody. This time, the snake was clever as it kept its two heads low on the ground and slowly approached from two different directions.

Rody gave a wry smile and gritted his teeth. He jumped out from his hiding spot and rushed forward to the figure. He found that the figure was covered in a black robe. The material of the robe was similar to the one used by the Black Veil Saint. The figure's long and black hair covered the figure's face, but it seemed like the figure was a woman.

At that critical moment, Rody did not think. He picked up the woman and quickly ran. He hurriedly threw the stone that he had

picked up earlier at the mountain wall.

There was a clash as the stones hit the distant mountain wall above. The two heads of the snake immediately rushed and slammed into the mountain walls. Rody took that opportunity to run out of the cave.

The snake continued to thrash out from behind Rody. However, Rody deliberately lightened his footsteps. Even if occasionally there was a little bit of sound, it would be masked by the sound of the stones crashing from the mountain walls.

When Rody entered the pitch dark cave, that huge strange snake was still thrashing outside in the mountain pit. Rody followed the cave path and ran down it. It was dark and Rody could not see the path. As a result, he stumbled a few times. With that large monster behind him he had to ignore the pain.

Rody could not help but think to himself, I wonder if I could cut off its heads with the Half Moon Slash.

Although Rody thought of it, he knew he could only use the Half Moon Slash three times at most. On the other hand, the giant snake had ten heads. Even if he were to cut down two or three heads, he might not be able to kill the snake. If he were to fight using that little bit of fighting energy, he would be exhausted in the end, and he would perish quickly.

Rody ran for quite a distance. Unfortunately, he did not know if the path he took would lead him to something else. After all, that giant snake came from that cave. He was afraid there may be some strange creatures, below. If he were to enter the nest of the snake, even with just one such creature, he would probably lose his life.

That giant snake behind him had already occupied the valley of the mountain. As a result, Rody could not turn back. He could only run forward.

Suddenly, Rody tripped on some stones. This caused him and the

person he was carrying to roll down the tunnel of the mountain.

Rody finally stopped rolling after about ten meters. After that, he struggled to get up. He felt pain all over his body. In the dark, he grasped wildly with his hands. Suddenly, his left hand managed to catch something. He gave a hard squeeze and realized that he was holding a person's leg. He was stunned for a moment before realizing that it was the leg of the Silvermoon clansman.

However, Rody felt strange that there was something at that person's leg. When he touched it, he found that it was a small, metal bell. Rody felt something familiar about the bell, but he was dizzy and could not recall what it was about.

A chilly wind blew in the cave. Rody feared that the snake would follow the cave tunnel to come back. He struggled to stand and then carried that person with him. He continued to move down the tunnel.

Just now, when he was running for his life in a haste, he had not paid much attention to the person he was carrying. He now realized that person was unusually light, soft and had a delicate figure. The body also had a light faint fragrance. She's a woman!

Although Rody was sure that she was one of the two Silvermoon people that had looked for him, he could not tell if she was the person whom he injured or the person who stood behind him without showing her face.

After walking for some time in the dark, Rody felt like this mountain was endlessly long. Rody was already tired for the night. He was also carrying someone and was quite breathless. He could not help but asked Andy in his mind. "Just now you said that the huge snake was the 'Fang of the Pit'. What do you mean?"

Andy's voice only resounded in Rody's head. However, when Andy spoke in the extremely dark and cold night, it became a bone-chilling experience.

“That monster is a high ranked Mythical Beast, the legendary Mystic Dragon’s ninth son. According to the legends, the Mystic Dragon was amongst the most powerful beings created by the Gods. However, it betrayed the Gods and got sealed in the abyss of hell. The snake we just saw was the ninth Mythical Beast created by the Mystic Dragon. According to the myths, the Mystic Dragon created nine powerful Mythical Beast to be its subordinates to challenge the Gods. However, the Mystic Dragon was not as strong as the Gods. That was why all the Mythical Beasts he created had a flaw. That snake was the ninth Mythical Beast created, and it had defective eyes. That snake was known as the 'Fang of the Pit'. which meant the tooth that guards the Abyss of Hell.

“Wait!” Rody suddenly stopped and asked, “The tooth that guards the Abyss of Hell.” Rody spoke in an unnatural tone of voice. “If the snake was guarding there... does that mean... that path would take us to hell’s abyss? Was that where the Mystic Dragon was sealed?”

“Kid, are you afraid?” the skeleton laughed in Rody’s mind.

Rody snorted and replied, “Nonsense! I cannot even defeat a snake! Let alone a dragon!”

约尔曼冈德 or ‘yue er man gang de’. Not knowing what it is, I used google image to find many snakes, wolves, knights, anime characters, robots, the Kraken, and finally found a card that says ‘Jormungandr the Serpent’.

This monster sure looks like the Hydra. But its name says otherwise. At the same time there is another monster in chinese mythology, the nine-headed 相柳 (Xiāngliǔ) which is not the Hydra.

深渊之牙. Fang of the Pit. Taken from the same Chinese name of a dagger in World of Warcraft.

Chapter 119: Deep in the Canyon

When Diane woke up, she felt that her lips were dry. Her mouth was filled with the smell of blood mixed with a sweet and sour taste. The bones in her body seemed broken. Every time she moved a little bit, her chest started to hurt. Suddenly, she remembered that she and one of the Elders had secretly followed the Duke of the Tulip Family into a cave. When she thought of that, her facial expression changed. She recalled seeing her companion getting swallowed by that terrible monster. She was also hit hard and had then fainted.

Her vision that was initially blur began to clear up. She then saw the Duke of the Tulip Family looking at her with a smile.

Diane was surprised and immediately woke up. As she tried to support herself up, she felt a pain in her chest. However, the pain only helped to make her sober.

Rody coldly looked at her and said, “So it was you! I did not expect you to be from the Silvermoon Clan! You sneakily hid in the Purple Leaf City and even dared to hide by my side. No wonder you stayed behind me that night. Were you afraid that I would recognize you?”

Diane gave a cold smile and said, “Fine! Since you have seen me, I have nothing left to hide! What you said is correct. The day I met you in the Purple Leaf City, I had already made up my mind to get close to you. It was just that the idiotic Governor-General asked me to serve you a drink and to attend to you which gave me an excuse!”

She looked around and saw that only the two of them were sitting in the middle of the cave. The surrounding walls had numerous big and small black holes. She frowned and asked, “Where is this place?”

Rody gave a wry smile and replied, “I do not know. I carried you

and ran away from that snake. After that, we ended up here. You see...”

Rody slowly stood up and pointed at one of the tunnels. He then lightly continued, “We rolled out from that hole.”

When Diane heard the word ‘snake’, she showed an expression of fear. She trembled as she asked, “That monster, what is it? My... my companion...”

Rody immediately interrupted her and said, “Stop your wishful thinking. Your companion is dead. I have no way of saving people from that snake’s stomach.”

Diane shook her head and sighed. She then looked up at Rody and said, “Duke of the Tulip Family, don’t you have anything to ask me?”

Rody gave a wry smile and replied, “What is there to ask? You are someone from the Silvermoon Clan. It is normal for you to hide in the Purple Leaf City to execute your plan. Although I do not expect you to secretly follow me, I also do not think that there is anything strange about it... As for the others, hmph, let us leave here alive first before we talk about it!”

Diane nodded. Although she did look very well, but after hesitating for a little, she managed to whisper, “Thank you. Thank you for saving me.”

Rody pretended that he did not hear her words as he blankly looked at the numerous holes around him. He had a worried expression on his face. After a while, he smiled and said, “It looks like we cannot use the same way back... especially if we do not want to meet that snake. The problem is that I have no idea where to go from here.”

Rody looked helpless under the dim light.

Diane shook her head and replied, “We obviously cannot go back that way. That strange creature is too powerful. The two of us will

not be able to defeat that snake. We might as well randomly pick a tunnel and resign ourselves to fate.”

Rody looked at her and said, “You don’t seem to be bothered. Your companion is already dead. Don't you really care?”

Diane gave a wry smile. Her pale face showed an indifferent expression. “For the revival of the great Kara clan, we have already sworn to sacrifice our lives for the God of Kara.”

Rody pursed his lips and secretly thought to himself, You all don’t care about life and death, but I care about it a lot!

In desperation, Rody closed his eyes and randomly picked a direction and then a tunnel to go through. Diane could not help but laugh at Rody’s actions. Rody glared back and seemed to say, “If you have a better idea, go ahead and try.”

The two of them did not dare wait too long as they were afraid that the snake might reappear. Rody bent down to once again carry Diane. Diane struggled a little before realizing that her injuries were not light. After that, she stopped resisting. Rody coldly said, “Stop struggling! Do you think I want to carry you? Hmmp... I don't give two hoots... ”

The path the two of them took became narrower as they traveled. Rody secretly felt uneasy while Diane stayed silent. Rody then said, “It is better that the road has become narrower. That way, even if that snake were to catch up with us, it will not be able to get in here. Isn’t this better?”

Both of them did not speak much as they both felt uneasy. Fortunately, they did not encounter any danger even though the path was rugged. Not knowing how far they had traveled, Rody felt very tired and started to sweat. The sweat flowed down his face and dropped onto Diane's face. She did not say anything but secretly felt moved. She then sighed and suddenly asked, “Duke of the Tulip Family, why did you save me earlier? I was already injured. If you had left me behind, you could probably run away

faster.”

Rody felt irritated and could not help but glare at her, “Do you want to die? If so, just tell me. I will immediately drop you!” As he said that, he started to walk faster.

Moments later, the cave started to become brighter. Rody turned a corner and saw a light. There was also a light breeze blowing towards them. The air was cold and fresh.

Rody cheered and quickly walked to the entrance of the cave.

Outside the entrance of the cave was the mountain side. In front of the cave was an open space surrounded by mountains. The sky looked gray and was covered in fog.

Rody looked carefully and saw that he was at the end of a canyon. The canyon path led out towards his left flanked by the mountain walls. However, it was not certain as to where the canyon led to. A fog covered the canyon, and visibility had been reduced to about a few steps only. The exit of the cave was in the canyon. There was more space on the other side, but it was difficult to determine where the path would take them to.

In any case, they had finally walked out of the mountain wall. Rody could not help but feel happy. While holding on to Diane, he jumped out of the cave as he continued and laughed, “It looks like our luck is quite good. We managed to leave that place by randomly picking a road.”

Diane looked at the mountain wall of the cave that they had just left. Suddenly, she gave a deep sigh. “We do not seem to have left... but rather... entered.”

“What?”

“Look at the wall of this mountain.”

After hearing what she said, Rody looked at the wall of the mountain. He found numerous big and small tunnels on the wall, and one of the tunnels was the one they had taken just then.

“What’s going on?”

Diane lightly said, “Did you not notice? How many tunnels were there when we were in the mountain?”

Rody shook his head.

Diane frowned and continued. “You did not pay attention, but I counted. There were fourteen tunnels. You randomly picked one... but count now, how many tunnels are there?”

Rody looked around for a moment and then softly replied, “Thirteen.”

“That’s right. When we left, there were fourteen tunnels. Now, there are only thirteen tunnels. That is, one tunnel is missing. Don’t you think it is strange that all the thirteen tunnels are in one location?”

Rody’s face sank as he replied, “You mean to say that all the thirteen tunnels are traps, and only one is an exit. However, we did not take the correct one?”

Diane nodded and sighed. “You just only realized?”

Rody was silent for a moment before he frowned and said, “Whatever it is, we are now outside of that cave. As long as our direction is clear, we will certainly get back to the Flame Tribe!”

Diane looked dejected. “Get back? Do you think that the tunnels are natural? I believe someone dug out those tunnels. Those man-made tunnels were meant to make people lose their way! Thirteen of those tunnels lead to one place! Do you think that is a good sign?”

Finally, Rody became silent as he knew that the woman had made sense.

Andy whispered in his mind, “What this woman said makes sense. Boy. I suggest you better turn back. I feel that there is something wrong about this place.”

Rody sighed. He carried Diane and turned back into the tunnel. Just as soon as he reached the entrance of the tunnel, he heard a faint hiss coming from the tunnel. Rody's expression could not help but change as he exclaimed, "That huge snake!"

Diane stammered, "It...It has gone back. It has gone back to that large cave."

Rody gave a wry smile and said, "Since it has gone back, we cannot go back unless we want to encounter it."

The surrounding was quiet, and the two of them looked at each other. Rody then asked, "What should we do? Should we go down the canyon or use the other side?"

Diane looked restless as she replied, "I do not know but... I feel that something is very wrong. I grew up in the mountains and have never seen such a quiet place...There are no birds in the sky or animals on the ground. There are also no trees... This entire place feels dead."

Rody shivered and commented, "That sounds so frightening. I do not believe!"

Even though Rody was scared, he carried Diane and walked towards the canyon. The moment he walked two steps forward, he felt a burst of cold wind. It was not winter, but that cold wind was like the prickly cold wind of winter. Rody suddenly realized and could not help but softly say, "I know now! This is the other end of the Death Canyon! We... we have entered the Death Canyon!"

Diane was so startled that she almost fell from Rody's arms. She trembled and asked, "Did you say that we have entered... the 'Summit of Evil'?"

Rody froze for a moment. After that, he remembered that when the Silvermoon Clan visited him that night, they said that the Death Canyon was known to them as the 'Summit of Evil'.

Rody then asked, "Which way should we use? Didn't you say that

the Silvermoon Clan is a guardian for this place? Do you know the circumstances here?”

Diane suddenly shouted, “Get out! Get out! We must leave this place! This is the command of True God Kara. Nobody is allowed to enter this place! Leave quickly!” She twisted and turned her body in Rody's arm, panic gripping her.

Rody hugged her tighter and shouted, “Stop struggling! I am leaving! Do you think I like this place?” Rody said as he walked towards the canyon in large strides. However, his thoughts and his actions were completely different.

That night, he originally had wanted to find out Wuya's secret. He had sneaked into that secret entrance but did not expect it to turn into an adventure that would lead him to the Death Canyon.

Rody then recalled that Wuya had admitted to having a ‘serious injury’ as a result of entering the Death Canyon. Rody could not help but feel cold as Wuya was not ‘seriously injured’. According to Andy's speculation, Wuya was a victim of some kind of spell that made him age rapidly. If Wuya, who was so powerful, had ended up in that kind of predicament, Rody did not have any intention to try his luck.

He walked without stopping and entered the canyon. The canyon was wide with two large cliffs on both sides. The canyon path was rugged with some kind of fog in front. However, the fog became thicker as Rody went in further. After some time, Rody could barely see anything and his visibility was only about ten steps ahead of him.

“Really evil.” Rody was secretly vigilant but he did not slow down.

Suddenly, there was a light sound of something collapsing in front. It was the sound of something falling down on the ground.

Rody was shocked. He stopped walking and strained his ears to

listen, his face serious.

He heard the crashing sound approach him. Although the sound was not loud, it was certainly getting nearer. Rody put down Diane and took out his dagger. The mountain people had said that the Death Canyon was extremely frightening. For many years, as long as a person walked in there, he would not come out alive. There was no guarantee that the Death Canyon had no strange and ferocious beasts. The giant snake he saw that night was frightening enough.

On top of that, not only did Rody 'enter' the Death Canyon, but he was actually standing in one of the deepest parts of the canyon.

Diane squatted on the floor with an expression of anxiety and fear. Her face was deathly pale. She subconsciously grabbed Rody's clothes and trembled.

There were two strange squeaks. Rody finally saw the thing that was crawling on the ground, in front of him. The moment he saw it, his hair started to stand on end...

Chapter 120: Bloodthirsty Spider

Spider!

Diane almost fainted the moment she saw it.

It was an extremely large spider!

The thing that was crawling toward Rody was as large as a washbasin. Its eight, long, yellow, hairy legs were as thick as Rody's arms. Its eight legs were crawling non-stop, rubbing against the gravel on the path and making a strange noise.

Diane was a woman, after all. She was frightened of such furry creatures and immediately screamed.

Rody was also stunned. Cold sweat appeared on his head, and he could not help but murmur, "Spider...What the hell! I have never seen spiders as large as a washbasin before!"

Seeing that the spider was rushing towards him faster than ever, Rody quickly stooped to pick up an egg-sized stone and threw it hard at the monster.

There was a loud 'clang' sound. The stone struck the back of that large spider causing it to roll away a little before stopping. But the spider was none the worse for it. It merely shook and hissed at Rody with a strange sound.

"What the hell! The spider can hiss!" Rody glared at it, "Its shell must be very hard! The strength I used just now was enough to break an ox's bones."

After shaking its body that spider then started crawling towards Rody again. It was so fast that Rody was surprised. In a hurry, Rody responded by kicking the spider. He felt as if he was kicking a stone. With that kick, that spider flew up, somersaulted twice in the air and then landed on the ground. After that, the spider got up again. Its front legs pointed towards Rody and made threatening gestures.

Seeing that the spider was cautiously approaching again, Rody held his dagger and harshly shouted, “Shit! Come on! Large insect! I am not afraid of you! Let us see if your shell is harder or my blade is sharper!”

Rody then glanced at Diane who was trembling violently beside him. She was also clutching more tightly onto his clothes. Rody could not help but pat her and shout, “What are you afraid of? If it dares approach, I will cut it into several pieces. I...”

Rody suddenly paused. He could hear loud crashing sounds of the spiders from the surrounding areas. The sounds were destroying Rody’s confidence. Large shadows began to show up in the surrounding fog. Following that, numerous spiders crawled out of the fog in front of Rody. They too were as large as a washbasin.

Those long and hairy legs crawled all over as the spiders surrounded Rody and Diane.

“Ahh!” Diane screamed. Her voice was full of horror and fear. Rody swallowed his saliva and thought to himself. I am finished. It seems like I won’t be eaten by the snake, but instead, I will be eaten by spiders.

Taking a deep breath, he gathered his fighting energy and was instantly wrapped in a pale golden light. He swept around with his dagger as he spun around and drew out a golden circle in the fog. The spiders closest to the circles fell down. Their hard shell was broken by the golden fighting energy. Some had their limbs broken, some were immediately sliced into two, revealing their red and green insides.

When Rody saw that, he was scared and nauseated, but he did not dare to stop moving his hands. He berated in a loud voice and brandished his dagger, continuously driving away the approaching spiders.

The surrounding huge and hairy monsters continued to gather and grew larger in number. They did not fear death and crowded

together. Occasionally, there were a few spiders that were swept away by Rody or had their abdomens sliced open. That immediately caused a few other spiders to jump at them while many more continued to give an itch-inducing hiss.

What the hell? Are these really spiders? Shouldn't spiders be on trees?

As more and more spiders rushed in, the amount of space Rody could control became smaller. There were times that a few of those monsters got past Rody's guarded area and landed near his feet. Those spiders were immediately kicked away by Rody.

The dagger in Rody's hands was too short. It was inconvenient to bend down and slash the spiders at his feet. Rody was sweating from tension and fatigue. He had been running around the entire night carrying Diane, and he had traveled for quite a long distance. At the moment, he was using his fighting energy in desperation, but the consumption of that energy was also quite high. He soon noticed his fighting energy becoming weaker and the golden light becoming dimmer. He was depending on Andy to warn him about which direction the spiders were coming from and was barely resisting the attacks.

Rody was breathing heavily when Diane suddenly shouted, "Sit down beside me!"

He looked down and saw that at some point in time, Diane had drawn a small circle. She was sitting in the middle of the circle, with her legs crossed. Her face was as white as paper, and she was sweating profusely. In front of her was a squarish crystal-like object placed on the ground. Diane's eyes were shut. Her two hands were at her chest with her index finger pointing upwards.

"Quickly!" She shouted again when Rody did not respond.

The moment Rody heard her, he stopped thinking and immediately sat down.

Diane suddenly opened her eyes and spat out a mouthful of blood. The blood splattered all over the crystal-like object and then she shouted, “Move back!”

The crystal-like object suddenly burst into brightness. A dazzling red light then burst out within the circle. The spiders near the circle shrieked and retreated. The spiders that were in the circle immediately scurried away as if they were being burned.

More and more spiders continued to gather outside the circle, but not a single one dared approach the circle.

Rody and Diane turned pale just by listening to the unending hisses and the occasional nipping sound of the spiders. They felt that even their nightmares were never as frightening as that. Although they knew that the spiders dared not cross the red circle, the threatening screeches of the numerous huge spiders were still bone chilling.

“Good!” Andy’s voice sounded relieved. “Fortunately, that woman knows a little bit of magic. These ‘Bloodthirsty Spiders’ are just low ranked Mythical Beasts. There is nothing frightening about them. However, they always appear in groups and becomes problematic. These low ranked Mythical Beasts could only bite with their fangs. It will be alright as long as you are careful when they fly up.”

Rody immediately turned stiff. His hands and legs turned cold as he shouted, “What did you say? These strange monsters can... they can fly?”

Before Andy could reply, one of the spiders suddenly shook. After that, a pair of wings suddenly appeared at the top of the spider’s shell. The wings started to flap and the spider flew towards Rody. The red circle on the ground could not stop it. Rody was quick to respond. He waved his dagger while sitting on the ground and cut the flying spider into two. It fell onto a group of spiders and then the spiders pounced on it.

Diane quivered and almost cried, “They... they can fly.”

Rody gritted his teeth, “Damn it! Let’s fight!” Rody stood up and held his dagger with one hand. He then gathered all of his fighting energy, and his body started to emit a golden flame. The light was very bright and dazzling. The pale gold color was also becoming more intense. Rody’s body was soon wrapped in the golden light. Rody suddenly opened his eyes. He grabbed Diane off the ground and shouted, “Go to hell!”

The golden light on his body suddenly burst out. Countless rays of golden light scattered like arrows. All the spiders that were struck by the light were crushed.

All the other spiders immediately scattered and backed away. Immediately, an open space with a radius of at least ten meters was available. The ground was covered with the dead bodies of the spiders and a strange stench filled the spot. The golden light had also immediately faded. Rody’s body shook as he could barely support himself. He then whispered, “Quickly run! To the left!”

Sure enough, after sweeping out those spiders on the left, a large opening could be found. The two of them supported each other as they ran towards the opening. However, after they had just walked a few steps, the spiders surrounded them again. There were many spiders, and all of them did not seem to fear death. When he saw that the opening had been sealed off by those hairy monsters, Rody showed a trace of despair and gave a wry smile, “That’s it. I am going to die here, today. However, I just never expected to be eaten by spiders.”

Diane also gave a wry smile and whispered, “The True God Kara will protect my soul.”

Rody pursed his lips and cursed, “Pray to your God only after you’re dead and buried in the ground!”

Diane raised her eyebrows but before she could speak, a cold voice came from behind. “Lord Duke. You seem to be enjoying

yourself at my place.”

When Rody heard the voice, he turned around and was shocked.

Rody saw Wuya's white figure slowly approached from behind him. Wuya was covered in a white ball of light. He slowly walked into the group of spiders. The spiders acted as if they had encountered their worst enemy. Wherever Wuya went, they would retreat to avoid him. They did not dare approach the white light around his body. Occasionally one or two spiders would get too near. Before they could actually touch Wuya, they would come into contact with the white light. Immediately, the spiders would hiss as they were burned to ashes by a white flame.

Wuya was like a flame moving in the snow. Wherever he went, the snow would melt. As he slowly approached, he had casually swept the numerous groups of spiders to clear out a path.

Wuya slowly stood in front of Rody. The surrounding groups of spiders stayed a few meters away. Wuya then looked at Rody without expression and lightly said, “Lord Duke. Please come with me.” After that, he glanced at Diane, who was beside Rody.

Wuya did not mention anything about Rody sneaking into his room nor did he rebuke or interrogate Rody. Rody showed an embarrassed expression. He supported Diane and immediately followed Wuya.

Gradually, they used the road they came from to go back to the open space at the end of the canyon. They had arrived at the cave exit used by Rody and Diane earlier.

The spiders initially followed closely from behind. However, once they reached the end of the canyon, they seemed to have bumped into an invisible wall. They stopped there and did not step out of the canyon.

“Those spiders... what happened?” Rody could not help but comment, “It looks like they only dare remain at the canyon.”

Wuya turned around and glanced at Rody. “Lord Duke, you think this is strange? Let me tell you why.” He then stretched out his hand, opened his palm and shot out a flame from the middle of his palm. Wuya then gently shook his hand and that flame flew out and landed in the middle of the group of spiders. The spiders were shocked and immediately scattered. In the rush of the spiders, some were pushed out of the dense fog in the canyon... and an extremely strange scene appeared in front of Rody.

The few spiders that were pushed out of the dense fog barely had the chance to crawl back in before their body stopped. The spiders' bodies gradually petrified starting from its legs and within a short moment, they had turned to stone.

“Has Lord Duke seen it clearly?” Wuya smiled and asked. However, the smile was indifferent and did not have a single trace of emotion.

Rody opened his mouth to take a few deep breath before he replied, “Abnormal! Everything here is abnormal!”

Wuya nodded. “Well said.” He then paused and said softly, “Let’s go.”

Diane then asked, “Go where? The cave is on the right!”

Wuya gave a smile and replied, “Cave? I did not say we are going to the cave, nor did I say that we are going back that way.”

Rody’s expression changed and he asked, “Chief Wuya, what did you say?”

Wuya looked at an open space in the distance and lightly said, “Weren’t you interested in this place, Lord Duke? Since you have put in so much effort to come here, you might as well go in and take a look. Just as well, I have recuperated for so many days and had planned to go to this ‘Summit of Evil’, to take a good look inside. What is in this restricted area of Kara?”

Wuya showed a strange gaze as he finished speaking.

Andy's voice suddenly reached Rody, "Boy, have you noticed? He seems... he seems to have become younger. He seems to have reverted to when we first saw him."

Wuya glanced at Rody and Diane before he lightly said, "Since all of us are interested in this place, we might as well go in together. Lord Duke, Do you agree?"

Do I agree?

At this moment, is it possible to disagree?

Chapter 121: Samsara River

The sky had turned bright. The terrain had also become more open as the mountains on both sides gradually spread out. Weeds could be seen on the ground that should have been barren. Wuya, who was wearing a pair of hemp shoes, led the way. Along the way, he did not say a single word, and he also seemed to ignore the hostile glares of Diane.

Rody looked worried as he followed Wuya. Diane was injured and she looked pale. She also still had some bloodstains at the corner of her mouth. Rody frowned and could only pull her along.

The faint sound of rushing water could be heard ahead. Rody and Diane were both surprised when they heard the sound. The two of them had experienced all sorts of dangers since last night and felt bitter.

The ground had started to level out. The surface of the ground was also no longer covered with hard stones. The soft soil was easier to walk on. They followed down the path and found a small river. The river did not look deep and some exposed boulders could be seen on the water surface. The river was washing over the smooth stones, making a gushing sound. The river was not wide. It looked more like a small stream.

Diane could not help but exclaim happily. She walked faster and wanted to move ahead. However, Rody felt that something was strange and stopped her. "Wait! Look!"

They saw that Wuya, who was in front, was standing several meters away from the small river. His hands, which were originally clasped behind him, were now at his sides.

"Something is wrong," Rody whispered. Diane's face turned red when Rody pulled her hand. She struggled a bit for Rody to release her hand as she asked, "What is wrong?"

Wuya took a deep breath and then slowly opened his hands and mumbled something.

Suddenly, the ground started to tremble. Diane was not prepared for it and almost fell down. Cracks formed on the ground at Wuya's feet. As the quakes continued, the cracks extended further to the front. The cracks became larger as the quakes became stronger.

During the earthquake, the current of that small river also vibrated. The originally calm river was now surging forth. The water was rapid. As the earthquakes continued, bubbles appeared in the river as if the water was boiling.

After that, a rumbling roar could be heard and the river water suddenly exploded. Water splashed everywhere. Numerous flopping sounds could be heard as small silver things jumped out of the river. After that, numerous palm-sized fish fell on the river bank. The fish had silver scales. When they fell on the ground, they did not die immediately and kept flopping on the ground.

Wuya lowered his hands and the earthquake gradually stopped. The cracks in the earth also slowly closed up. However, the air still felt moist after the incident at the river.

“Let's cross the river now! Just be careful of the fish!” Wuya said and continued to walk forth with his hands behind him.

Rody and Diane looked at each other in shock. Just how powerful is Wuya?

Coughing a little, Rody and Diane continued to follow Wuya towards the river.

Wuya had already stepped into the shallow river. The water reached up to his calf, wetting the lower part of his clothing.

As Rody walked, he curiously looked at those small fish that were still flopping on the ground. Rody was surprised and unprepared when one of the struggling fish suddenly jumped up. It opened its

mouth in midair and shot a pallid light towards Rody's forehead.

Rody ducked and stretched out both of his arms, trying to catch the fish with his fingers. However, the fish fell to the ground, and its body immediately turned into a silver liquid.

Rody was horrified when he saw that he had caught a needle that was half as long as his fingers. The needle gleamed coldly like metal. It was incredible how that fish could spit out that kind of thing.

Wuya said suddenly, "Be careful. If you were hit by that needle, you would become a fish!"

Those words made Rody burst into a cold sweat, and he immediately threw away the needle. He quickly caught up with Wuya, walking in large strides. Diane felt weak in her knees, but she dared not slow down. She followed closely behind Rody.

The river was not as shallow as it looked. Rody pulled Diane along as they crossed the river. Their shoes were soaked and their feet felt slippery and uncomfortable. However, knowing that the river was home to those terrifying little fish, they did not dare to linger.

However, Wuya was not worried and lightly told Rody, "You do not need to worry at the moment. The sorcery I just used has made all the fish come out of the water. It would be a while before the fish from the upper stream start to gather here again."

Rody could not help but ask in a soft voice, "Earlier, you said that if a person was hit by the needle, he would become a fish in the river... does that mean that these fish were originally..."

"They were originally people," Wuya answered calmly. However, it was his next few sentences that made Rody turn cold. "These hundreds of years, there were countless people who yearned for the secrets of this valley. The world is big and there are many strong people. Did you think that the spiders in the canyon can

stop them all?”

When Wuya saw that Rody did not speak, he continued, “Even during the era of Abbas the Great, tens of thousands of people were dispatched on an expedition to find the legendary ‘Summit of Evil’. It was not known as to where Abbas the Great obtained the information that there was a magical artifact in there. As a result, almost half of the tens of thousands of expeditionary army died in the mountain while most of the other half were killed by the spiders. The rest all turned into fish when they crossed this river! In fact, it is not only the people of the Empire that attempted this. There were also many mountain warriors who took this risk. The result was that none of them survived! Just look at his river. Nobody knows how many ghosts still linger here...”

Diane trembled as she heard that. She could not help but loudly reply, “I don’t believe it! How big is this river? If it was according to what you said, wouldn’t this river have tens of thousands of fish? How can such a small river have so many fish?”

Wuya suddenly laughed and lightly replied, “Little girl of the Silvermoon Clan, you have a point. Didn’t your clan have a record of the ‘Samsara River’? When a fish kills a person, it will become river water. The person who is killed will then become a fish until it kills another person. After that, the fish will become river water again. A fish for a fish...A person for a person and a life for a life. This is the cycle!”

Wuya sounded cold and foreboding. Diane trembled and said, “Then... just now... you killed countless people!”

Wuya shook his head and replied, “I only helped them to reincarnate.”

“We are going ashore now. Be careful!” Wuya whispered and no longer spoke as he took the first step on the other side of the river.

Rody pulled Diane and once again stepped on solid ground. He had a strange feeling. The moment he crossed the ‘Samsara River’,

he felt that he had finally survived a disaster and was grateful that he was given a new lease of life.

Suddenly, Rody heard a buzzing sound and the scene in front of him changed. It seemed like the whole space was transformed. The empty space in front of him was torn open.

After that, Rody saw a huge and extremely dense forest in front of him. In the strange forest, there were dense trees with twisting vine, and there were countless weeds on the ground, about half the height of a person.

The howling of some unidentified wild beasts and chirping of birds could be heard in the forest. Those sounds, together, made the surroundings seem much livelier compared to earlier. Rody felt like he had just stepped into another world.

“What... What is going on?” Rody’s mouth opened for a moment before asking.

Diane had a complicated expression. Her eyes flashed and she did not know whether to be happy or afraid. She then murmured, “This... Is this the legendary ‘Forest of Death’?” Diane shivered and could not help but lean against Rody.

Wuya no longer showed an indifferent expression. He took a deep breath before saying in a low voice, “Well, I have finally reached here, again!” He then looked at the sky. His facial expression changed and then murmured, “I need to be fast. I only have half a day left...”

Wuya’s words were so soft that only he himself could hear. However, his tone of voice still sounded dignified...

Rody was shocked when Wuya slowly turned around. Wuya’s expression was no longer indifferent; instead, it had a hint of excitement.

“Both of you, welcome to the entrance of the ‘Summit of Evil’. From here onwards, you will have to rely on yourself for your own

safety. I cannot protect you anymore. Hopefully, God will bless and protect the three of us so that we can get out of here alive.”

As Wuya slowly said those words, he struggled to show a small smile. However, the smile seemed strained.

Chapter 122: Wuya's True Colors

Rody pulled Diane along and followed Wuya as closely as possible. He had just seen a small bird perched on a flower. That flower which was as large as a bowl suddenly closed up, as if it was a mouth swallowing the bird. After that, they no longer dared to approach those strange plants.

Wuya had already told them their destination. It was at the center of the forest.

Legend said that in the center of the forest, there was a tree. The tree was as large as a small mountain and was tall enough to reach the skies. However, the tree could not be seen until one had reached the foot of the tree. That tree was the gate to the 'Summit of Evil'.

Wuya said those words with a grave expression. His words did not sound very natural. Wuya then smiled and lightly said, "This is something I just heard about. I have never entered this place before."

Wuya then glanced at the pale-faced Diane and coldly said, "For the situation in this area, perhaps that little girl from the Silvermoon Clan might know more? I know that her clan has lots of legends about this place. Isn't that right?"

Diane then coldly glared at Wuya as she accused, "Is obtaining those ancient records the reason you exterminated our clan?"

Wuya stared at Diane for a while and then continued to walk forward without answering.

It was not easy to travel in that dense forest as there were no paths. Lush plants constantly blocked the way forward. When Rody entered the mountain, he had seen how the mountain people traveled through the mountain forest. Usually, one of the mountain people would carry a machete and lead the way. As he

walked ahead, he would swing his machete left and right, clearing the branches and bushes that blocked the way and create a path.

However, Wuya did not need to do that. As he strode in front, his body emitted a white light. All the plants that touched the white light would immediately wilt. There were also some plants that were immediately pulverized. Thus, as Wuya went by, he would create a path behind him.

This kind of superb cultivation made Rody and Diane exclaim in astonishment. However, Andy reminded Rody to be careful. This Wuya had been here before. Despite his incredible strength, he had to retreat in defeat. We still do not know what was the strange spell that caused him to age rapidly...

“Stop!” Rody suddenly shouted and pulled Diane to a side.

Wuya, who was in front, glanced at Rody with a knowing look. “Lord Duke. You noticed too?”

Rody replied, “Yes!”

Diane frowned and then asked, “Notice what?”

Rody shook his head and replied, “An hour ago, I already had a strange feeling. I felt something was staring at us.”

Diane shrugged her shoulders. She immediately looked around and trembled before saying, “Don’t talk nonsense! Where is it?”

Rody closed his eyes and whispered, “It’s definitely there somewhere!”

Wuya also nodded and said, “As expected of someone who fought against thousands. You are really sensitive. I also noticed it, but you were faster.”

Diane gritted her teeth and asked, “What is it?”

Rody did not reply and coldly looked at Wuya. Wuya shook his head and replied in a low voice, “Don’t look at me. I don’t know either.”

Just as soon as Wuya finished saying that, a howl from the forest suddenly pierced the air. Following that howl, more howling sounds came from all directions as if they were responding to one another.

All of them turned wary. They then heard the sound of a muffled rumbling, and the ground seemed to shake. Another faint muffled sound was heard, and then all the surrounding plants started to tremble.

“What is that?” Rody looked around vigilantly.

The rumbling sounds did not stop, and the vibrations of the earth became more and more violent. The sounds came from all directions and they seemed to be getting closer.

“What is approaching us now?” Diane turned pale.

Wuya took a deep breath, put his hands together and closed his eyes. From his body, a huge and transparent shadow rose. The shadow was several times his size. It was as if Wuya himself had become a phantom several times larger. The large image of Wuya suddenly opened its eyes, and they shot out a brilliant ray of light. After that, the shadow dissolved revealing Wuya still standing at the same spot. He then opened his eyes and said, “I saw it. It is a ‘Fenrir’.”

Before Rody could speak, Diane had already turned pale.

“What is ‘Fenrir’? What does it mean?”

Diane whispered, “In the language of our Silvermoon Clan, Fenrir means gigantic monster.”

“Gigantic monster? What gigantic monster?” Rody continued to ask loudly. Suddenly, there was a loud rumble, and a large tree in front crashed not far from them. It was then accompanied by a long howl. A huge figure then appeared in front of the three of them.

“Gigantic... gigantic monster?” Rody was stupefied looking at the

large monster.

That monster had a height of over ten meters, a ferocious face, and long messy crimson hair and beard. Behind the monster was a scaly dragon tail. Its colossal body was wrapped with what looked like some broken armor. Wherever that giant monster treaded on, it crushed out an open space. It carried a large hammer in its hands and was looking straight at Rody and the others.

The monster howled loudly and swung its hammer. The hammer shot out a fierce gust of wind as it smashed towards the three of them.

“Run!” Rody shouted as he pulled Diane to the side.

There was another large rumble. A tree was swept down at the location where the three of them had initially stood. The hammer had slammed ferociously onto the ground and created a deep crater. The earth shook. Rody staggered and was unable to keep his balance. He fell while holding Diane, and they both tumbled to the ground.

Rody felt and heard another gust of fierce wind. A huge shadow fell from the sky. The hammer had started swinging downwards.

Rody held Diane on the ground and roared loudly. His fighting energy burst out. It was as if his body had become a golden light. He exhausted all the energy in his body and lifted the dagger in his hand towards the falling hammer.

There was a loud explosion as the golden fighting energy repelled the black hammer. Rody spat out blood, and the dagger in his hand also broke apart.

The giant monster also roared loudly. It once again raised its hammer and smashed down at Rody.

Diane responded immediately and pulled Rody along. She ran away as swiftly as an arrow and jumped onto a tree a short distance away. But the violent quake caused by the hammer when it

smashed on the ground caused both of them to fall off the tree.

When they fell, Diane landed on Rody, causing him to cough out more blood.

Wuya shouted from afar, “Quickly run! Run to the middle of the forest! Do not turn back!”

Diane struggled to pull Rody up and they ran away in terror. She heard Wuya’s voice, followed by a burst of fire being shot into the sky. After that, there was a roar and the gigantic monster fell down crushing several trees. In a hurry, the two of them had not taken any precaution. When that gigantic monster fell, it dropped its large hammer right in front of Rody and Diane.

The impact caused both Rody and Diane to fall. They noticed that the shaft of the hammer was as broad as a person’s waist.

They then looked back and saw a shocking scene.

That snake with ten heads was in the distance. Its ten heads were stretched out, bobbing about. Its large body had already crushed the surrounding small patches of trees. The large snake hissed loudly and started to breathe out fire.

Lying on the ground was the gigantic monster whose body was charred. Its body kept trembling as it struggled to get up. More roars could be heard, and several more strange creatures crushed the surrounding trees and approached from a distance.

The large snake held its position. Its ten heads rose up and hissed in protest at the approaching strange creatures.

The large monsters all raised their heads and roared back angrily. One of the monsters swung its hammers and struck one of the snake's head. The head fell down sideways and crashed into a tree. However, another of the snake's head struck the large monster's chest. The large monster roared, staggered backward and fell.

The remaining large monsters approached in big strides. The heads of the snake opened their mouths and breathed out fire. One

of the large monsters used its hand to ward off the flames. It then gave an earthshaking shriek before it fell, right onto the snake's body.

The snake hissed in pain as another hammer came down. It smashed into the snake's body, causing a loud impact sound. Some of the snake's rigid scales immediately broke, and the snake rolled on the ground in pain. It then wrapped its body around the large monster. Both the snake and the large monster fell down and twisted together. The roar of the monster and the hissing sounds of the snake did not stop as they fought.

One of the large monsters dropped its hammer and used its hands to seize the tail of the snake. It struggled to separate the snake from the body of the other large monster. However, it did not take precautions against a snake head that breathed fire out into its face.

That large monster screamed. Its crimson haired face was immediately burned. Releasing the snake's tail, it used both its hands to cover its face and continued to scream. It then staggered aimlessly towards Rody and Diane.

Rody and Diane exclaimed and frantically escaped. The large monster clutched its face and could not see anything. It then tripped over the body of its collapsed companion and crashed.

Rody and Diane continued to exclaim and retreat. They saw a huge shadow falling towards them. Even though they were already running frantically, the large shadow was getting closer... With a loud bang, the large monster fell right in front of them.

Both of them thumped on the ground, feeling extremely exhausted.

Diane suddenly shouted, "Wuya! Where is Wuya? Shouldn't that snake be in that cave? How did it appear here?"

Rody showed a strange expression and then said softly, "Do you

still not understand? That huge snake... is Wuya!”

Chapter 123: The Strong Supports the Weak

The large monster fell about three meters in front of Rody and Diane. Its head was turned towards Rody and the dumbstruck Diane. Its crimson-haired face had been charred. One of its eyes was also burned and had become blind.

Suddenly, the gigantic monster gave a strange groan. One of its big red eyes slowly opened and stared at Rody and Diane.

Rody quickly dragged Diane and shouted, “Stop daydreaming! Run!”

The large monster stared blankly for a few moments before roaring. Its huge body slowly stood up and started to chase Rody and Diane. It no longer paid attention to that distant large snake.

Diane was so afraid that she no longer turned around to look. She tried to run as fast as she could, spurred on by the thundering footsteps behind her. The ground trembled with each step taken by the large monster. But Diane was injured. She was also extremely exhausted, and her legs were getting weaker. So actually, she was literally being dragged by Rody as they ran forward.

The large monster roared furiously and refused to give up chasing the two small preys. Rody and Diane had been running with all their strength. Although they were running very fast, it seemed to make no difference. The large monster was able to keep up with them with his huge strides. They were unable to shake off their pursuer.

Fortunately, they were smaller and more agile than that large monster. Rody pulled Diane, turning left and right as they ran in the jungle, weaving in and out of the trees. Luckily, the trees hindered the large monster. However, the large monster with its enormous strength often pushed down the big trees with just one hand. Besides that, the large monster seemed angry and would not give up the chase.

Rody gradually felt that he could not take it anymore. His body was almost broken after that monster's hammer strike. At that moment, he felt his chest tightened and his lungs burning. Rody found that it was becoming more difficult to breathe. The number of trees in front of them decreased. Suddenly, Rody was shocked when his foot stepped into an empty space. He then fell before he had the chance to scream.

Diane was being pulled by Rody all this while. Suddenly, she felt him stop for a while before feeling another strong pull forward. As both of their hands were slippery from the sweat, she lost her grip on him.

She then saw half of Rody's body trapped in a small quagmire. As Rody struggled, he slowly fell in deeper and deeper. He clawed wildly, but there was slush all around him, and he was unable to hold on to anything. Gradually, the quagmire had reached Rody's chest. Diane shouted in fear, "Don't move! This is the mountain marsh! You must not move! The more you struggle, the faster you will sink! "

Diane then lay down on the floor. Half of her body stretched over the quagmire as she grabbed one of Rody's hands and shouted, "I will pull you up! Be sure not to struggle!"

Most of the victims that had fallen into the quagmire were never seen again. Both people and animals would sink faster when they struggled. They would struggle until they were completely submerged. Fortunately, Diane was from the Silvermoon Clan and had grown up in the mountains. As a result, she was familiar with nature.

Diane grabbed hold of Rody's hand. However, before she had the chance to pull Rody out, a tree came crashing down and the fearsome monster loomed into partial view.

Diane was frightened as she could not get Rody out even though she had used all her strength to pull him. Rody's chest was already

submerged in the quagmire. He felt suffocated. He then shouted, "It's alright! Don't worry about me! Run quickly!"

Rody looked resolutely at Diane. She gritted her teeth for a moment and then took out that crystal-like object she previously used to drive away the spiders. The crystal-like object still had her blood on it. Holding the object in her hands, she whispered something that Rody could not understand. Rody was then surprised to see that Diane had started to fade until she became totally transparent. If it was not for the fact that Rody was still holding her hand, he would really have thought that she was gone.

Hands...

Suddenly, he looked at his own hand. He was shocked to see that his hand that was holding Diane's was also disappearing, inch by inch. First, his palm, followed by his arm and finally, his shoulders started to disappear...

Rody felt like his whole body was soaked in cold water. His eyes seemed to be covered by mist, and everything around him looked like it has a layer of water over it. It felt like he was underwater.

The large monster that was chasing them had knocked down another two more large trees. It was now in full view. Its large head looked around. It searched around the place with its remaining eye but could not find the two small preys. The gigantic monster roared non-stop towards the sky as he stomped around the place angrily. Those trees around it were also smashed in his anger.

The fearsome monster was roaring angrily and jumping up and down, not far from Diane. However, Diane did not dare make any sound. Even when some of the branches from the smashed trees fell onto her, she did not dare groan in pain.

Finally, the monster went somewhere else to vent its anger. The ground once again trembled with every step that the huge monster made. Diane felt relieved when she saw the figure disappear into

the dense trees. She gradually loosened her grip on the crystal-like object. The invisibility spell stopped, and her figure gradually reappeared. However, she felt desperate when she looked at Rody.

Originally, Rody was submerged up until his chest. However, when Diane looked again, she saw that most of Rody's head, including his nose and eyes, had also been submerged. Only his golden hair remained visible. One of Rody's arms had completely disappeared in the quagmire, while the other arm was still being held by Diane.

Diane gritted her teeth and forcefully pulled Rody by his arm. However, it was not easy to pull a robust figure like Rody out of the quagmire. Besides that, she was also injured, extremely exhausted and had spat blood a few times that day.

Sweat completely covered her head when she finally managed to pull half of Rody's body out of the quagmire. Rody's body, his eyes, and nose were covered in black mud. He was unconscious.

In her desperation, Diane had over exerted herself and felt her chest hurt. She tasted something sweet in her mouth and spat out some more blood. She felt anxious and almost cried. She could only think of one thing. I must not let him die! She continued pulling his heavy body, putting all her strength into the effort.

After some time, she finally pulled Rody out of the quagmire. She dragged him to the side where the ground was solid. Diane felt her body grow weak, and she could hardly move. She felt drowsy and was about to lose consciousness. However, she gently bit on her own tongue. The pain brought her mind back to focus.

She hurriedly wiped the dirt away from Rody's face and then gently patted it. However, Rody's eyes remained closed and there was no response. Diane shouted loudly, but in a panic, she had shouted in the Silvermoon's language.

Seeing that Rody still could not wake up, Diane felt anxious and fiercely pounded on Rody's chest several times. That made Rody

move a little. After that, a mouthful of sludge spurted out from his mouth. It just so happened that the sludge all spurted onto Diane's face. Rody then turned his head to one side and started to cough violently. A mixture of saliva, mucus, and sludge then spurted out from his nose and mouth.

The coughs were lung piercing but they finally allowed Rody to breathe. Rody then gasped for breath as he turned around to look at Diane.

He saw that Diane's face was full of sludge. The sludge had been spurted out by Rody. She glared at him with a mixture of happiness and anger.

Rody was surprised and then remembered that she had just saved him. After that, he could not resist laughing when he saw her charming face covered in sludge. Although Diane was angry, she was relieved that Rody had regained consciousness and the gigantic monster had already run off elsewhere. Looking at Rody's funny expression, she also could not help but laugh.

The two survivors felt relaxed and laughed for a long time. Diane then realized that she was leaning on top of Rody, and she quickly sat up. She blushed, but fortunately, her face was covered in sludge and was not noticed by Rody.

"Is it safe now?" Rody asked as he laughed.

Diane frowned and shook her head. She then replied, "I do not know. In this hell of a place, is there anywhere that is really safe?"

Rody then spat twice more and suggested, "Let us look for a place to wash. My mouth and nose are full of sludge. The sludge is very smelly!" Rody then felt nauseated when he thought of how old the sludge was.

She snapped, "Wash ourselves? Where can you find water here? Did you see any source of water from the moment we walked into this forest?" Diane, after all, was a girl. Her face was covered in

mud and she was now a little angry, so she vented her anger on Rody.

Rody struggled to stand and gave a wry smile. “I don’t know. Let us walk further inside first. If there is no water, then we will just have to endure it.”

Diane took a deep breath and then she asked, “What about Wuya? Shall we wait for him?”

“Him?” Rody sighed and replied, “Let us not wait for him. It is not like we can help him with anything. With his supernatural powers, his survival is up to fate.”

Diane had been busy running, but now that the situation was calmer, she remembered that Wuya was transformed from that large snake. Her expression changed and she trembled when she recalled that terrible giant snake.

Rody also frowned and said to himself, “Wuya was actually transformed from a snake. Yes. Its name is Jormungandr, Fang of the Pit, Guardian of the Abyss! Holy cow! I even thought he went to the shaman for healing, but he was actually cultivating as a snake!”

Andy laughed in his mind. “Why are you so stupid? Think for yourself, how could a mere mountain shaman, who only knew how to mystify, be able to help Wuya?”

Rody felt angry and knocked his forehead as he secretly said, “Bullshit! If you knew then why didn’t you say so earlier? You are just trying to act smart!”

There was a moment of silence before Andy continued. However, Andy’s voice was no longer modest and he sounded dignified. “Boy. I felt curious. There was an unusually strong energy coming from Wuya. That power was almost at or even surpassed the realm of ‘Domain Force’. However, the strength that he had shown tonight, although powerful, was far from the strength of someone

who had obtained 'Domain Force'."

"He has not obtained yet?" Rody was surprised. He then responded to Andy, "Old fellow! You call this 'has not obtained yet'? Didn't you see that he could create an earthquake just by casually muttering a few lines of incantation? The earthquake then caused the fish to jump out from the river. The light emitted from his body could even burn down those plants that came into contact with him. On top of that, he could even transform into a giant snake with ten heads and the heads could breathe out fire! He, alone, was able to get rid of so many strange creatures. Even with that superb ability, you are saying that he still has not obtained 'Domain Force'?"

"Of course not!" Andy spoke with disdain. "Do you think 'Domain Force' is something so simple? You, idiot! If this can be considered 'Domain Force', then there would have been plenty of people who could have done it several hundred years ago. Besides them, your little lover, the silly Black Veil Saint could also do what Wuya did tonight. The only difference is she cannot transform into a snake!"

The moment Andy saw that Rody was silent, he continued, "The so-called 'Domain Force' is the goal of high-level practitioners! It is almost close to the existence of God! Just look at Wuya. Just a few monsters and he was already having trouble! Right now, we do not even know if he is still alive! Do you think that with his current ability, he has obtained the 'Domain Force'?"

Rody then complained, "But you were the first to say that he had obtained the 'Domain Force'."

Andy then sighed and his voice became more solemn, "That is why I am surprised. According to what I saw, Wuya is definitely very strong. However, it is only at the level of a senior practitioner. If he really is the Fang of the Pit, then he is only a high ranked Mythical Beast. He only displayed a strength befitting a high ranked Mythical Beast and is still very far from the realm of Gods!"

Rody shook his head and asked, “So, what happened?”

Andy was silent before he slowly replied, “There are two possibilities. The first is that he has the treasure of somebody who had comprehended ‘Domain Force’ or that person’s crystallized condensed energy. However, this is unlikely. A practitioner that has comprehended ‘Domain Force’ has achieved a level of existence close to God. Why would he condense his energy into a crystal for someone else to use? This is actually a suicidal behavior.”

“What about the other possibility?”

“The other possibility is...” Andy spoke slowly in a low voice, “... that he is carrying an actual ‘magical artifact’.

Chapter 124: Two Drops of Fresh Blood

“Magical artifact?” Rody froze for a moment. “Magic...”

Andy immediately interrupted Rody’s thoughts and said, “I know what you are thinking of right now! There are several ‘magical artifacts’ that are being kept in the religious places of the Imperial Capital. However, I can tell you that those ‘magical artifacts’ are fakes and are used by the religious teachers to deceive the foolish believers. Real ‘magical artifacts’ can split the heaven and earth apart, and can cut into mountains and split the ocean.”

Rody grinned and asked, “So what if he has a ‘magical artifact’? What shall we do now? Shall we move ahead or go back? How are we going to get out of this hell of a place? How are we going to get out of this forest?”

Andy suddenly gave a weird laughter and said, “Boy, have you not thought of the reason why Wuya wants to come here?”

Rody froze for a moment. He had been busy running for his life and never had the leisure to think about this. Now that Andy had asked him, all kinds of thoughts started flashing in his mind immediately.

“Wuya is the large snake. The large snake is what the myth calls the ‘Fang of the Pit’. He is also supposed to be a mythical Guardian of the Abyss. The powerful Mystic Dragon, which had once betrayed the gods, was supposed to be in the Gates of the Abyss. Is this the place? Is the Gate of the Abyss in the middle of this deep forest? Is this the place where the Mystic Dragon is imprisoned? It is possible. Nobody had ever heard of such a scary place before.” After that, Rody frowned and continued to think. “Something does not seem right! If this is the place where the Mystic Dragon is imprisoned and Wuya is the legendary Guardian of the Abyss, then he should be guarding this place and preventing more people from entering! Why did he want to risk coming here twice?”

Andy also murmured, “You are right. Something is definitely wrong. There is also another point... Wuya is the Chief of the Flame Tribe but he is only about thirty years old this year. On the other hand, the ninth child of the Mystic Dragon, the Fang of the Pit, is already thousands of years old.”

Seeing Rody suddenly shaking and nodding his head, Diane could not help but ask, “What are you thinking about?”

Rody was suddenly awoken by what Diane said. He then had a thought and asked the girl of the Silvermoon Clan, “Your clan is the guardian of this place. Did you know that the 'Summit of Evil' is in this canyon? What is the secret of this place?”

Diane froze for a moment. She did not expect Rody would ask that kind of questions. Her expression changed as she whispered, “This secret... only the Elders know! All the ancient texts are also something that only the Elders can read. I do not know that much... Why do you ask all this?”

Rody shook his head and whispered, “I just want to find out more about this strange place... I want to know why Wuya tried so hard to come here...”

Before Rody could finish his sentence, a cold voice suddenly came from behind them. “Why ask her? I will tell you myself!”

Rody and Diane were surprised. They turned around to look. Not knowing when, but Wuya had already arrived behind them.

Although his voice still sounded cold, Wuya actually looked embarrassed. He no longer had the proud and cold expression. His originally spotless white linen clothes were now torn and stained with blood. The left side of his chest had a large patch of blood and it was still dripping.

His face looked green and white. The white parts of his face were also almost transparent. There were some bloodstains at the corner of his mouth. Just now, when he spoke his tone was cold. It

was obvious that he was unstable and lacked confidence. Looking at him carefully, it was also obvious that he was fidgeting because of his wounds. He was feeling a little weak.

“You want to know, right? I can tell you!” Wuya sounded conceited as he continued. “What you had thought of earlier is correct. I am Jormungandr. As you said, I am the ninth son of the Mystic Dragon, the Fang of the Pit.”

Rody's face changed when he realized that Wuya told them everything and did not hide anything. Meanwhile, Diane who was beside Rody exclaimed, “Ah!” They both looked at Wuya with a peculiar expression.

“You wanted to know what is at the end of this forest? Hmph. The ‘Summit of Evil’ is just what the Silvermoon Clan calls it. These are all words from that fellow, Kara! Let me tell you. Deep in these woods is where His Majesty, the great Mystic Dragon, sleeps.”

Those words shocked Rody and Diane. Finally, Rody understood. “Sure enough, it is true!”

Wuya slowly walked over. He seemed to be severely injured, and his movements were unstable. However, Rody sensed an oppressive feeling as Wuya slowly approached him. After all, Wuya was a mythical beast.

Wuya arrived in front of Rody and slowly sat down. He then whispered, “I am the Mystic Dragon's ninth son. When His Majesty was defeated, he was sealed in this forest. After that, I was also captured and my knowledge was sealed. My originally prideful self became a mindless Mythical Beast! What the hell! How can I, Jormungandr, be compared to lesser creatures? I am a high ranked creature created by the Mystic Dragon! However, they had used magic to keep me here! They made me guard this forest, which is what you call the ‘Gate of the Abyss’! Hmph! Despicable! They actually made the son of the Mystic Dragon guard the Mystic

Dragon's prison!" Wuya spoke in an agitated voice.

"Those despicable enemies had captured me after defeating His Majesty! Not only did they seal His Majesty, but they had also placed a seal on my consciousness! For a thousand years, I was a wild beast with no self-awareness! However, I woke up three decades ago! I realized that I am different from the other inferior creatures in this forest! I am the proud son of His Majesty, the Mystic Dragon. I am supposed to be dominating high above the others and not supposed to be just a simple snake, slithering around and biting others!"

Finally, Rody sighed and asked, "So... the moment you woke up, you immediately looked for a way to revive the Mystic Dragon! Is that why you changed your identity and became Wuya, the head of the Flame Tribe?"

"Hahahahaha..." Wuya gave a cold laugh. "I did not transform into him. Rather, I fused with him... As a mere human, he should feel honored to be able to fuse with me, the great Jormungandr!"

Rody suddenly thought of something and asked, "Wait... That... What about the prophecy you were talking about? You requested for the Empire to not enter the mountains... What is the real reason?"

Wuya was silent for a moment before he replied in a soft voice, "The reason I spoke that day is the real reason! The prophecy is true! However, I cannot tell you the source! Besides that, there is also a special reason why I asked you all to not enter the mountain!"

"What is that reason?"

Wuya hesitated for a moment and then he sneered. "There is no harm in telling you. The despicable enemy had sealed away the Mystic Dragon with a spell. Although the spell is powerful, high-level practitioners can still cancel it and revive the Mystic Dragon. However, the despicable enemy had also placed a vicious curse! His

Majesty must wake up under certain conditions, otherwise, His Majesty would not be able to regain his original strength. He would become like me, a Mythical Beast without self-awareness!"

Rody nodded and coldly replied, "So, you asked us to reach an agreement with you. You want our Emperor to order the people of the Empire not to enter this mountain?"

Wuya did not deny and replied, "You humans have a lot of high-level practitioners. However, most of you obey the orders of your Emperor."

Rody thought for a moment and then he sneered. "That is right. Everything can be conveniently justified." He then looked at the pale Diane beside him. He saw that she was looking at Wuya. She tightly held onto her precious crystal-like object, her eyes vigilant and fearful. She was just a girl for whom all these legendary things monsters had suddenly come to life. Naturally, she would feel frightened when she thought of all these terrifying monsters.

On the other hand, Rody was not afraid at all. He had already been trained to have very strong nerves. He did not know what would be so terrifying about that large snake. After all, he had already met the skeleton, Andy and Old Mark, who were also monsters that were centuries old. Besides that, Andy had also said that Wuya had not obtained the 'Domain Force'. Wuya was at most at the same level as the Black Veil Saint. Rody had already dared to risk his life to fight the Black Veil Saint last time.

"If that is the case, now that you entered this forest again this time, have you presumably found a way to revive the Mystic Dragon?"

Wuya's expression did not change as he replied, "Yes, I checked the ancient texts of the Silvermoon Clan, which I snatched from them, and found a way to wake up His Majesty... so... I need to take you and this girl together with me."

Rody felt uneasy and asked, "Why?"

Wuya laughed, but both his laughter and his voice felt extremely cold.

“That is because, to revive His Majesty, I would need the blood of two practitioners. The two practitioners— one must be the descendant of Kara’s clansmen, the other one must be the descendant of Protoss. The people of the Empire are the descendants of Protoss, while this girl from the Silvermoon Clan is a descendant of the Kara clansmen.” Wuya smiled as he spoke.

Rody started to have cold sweat and gave a strained laugh. “Blood? Haha... This is really such an ancient method...”

Wuya’s expression did not change, and he simply said, “Do not worry. I do not kill indiscriminately. Once I have used your blood, I will let you go; as long as you have the ability to go back from here.”

Go back?

Thinking of that river with those fish that could spit out needles and those horrific creatures, Rody sighed.

Wuya no longer spoke and he slowly stood up. His condition seemed to have improved. He looked and nodded at Rody and Diane as an indication that they could continue to walk forward.

Rody felt helpless. He knew that even if he tried to fight back right then, he would not be able to defeat Wuya. At the moment, he and Diane were seriously injured and also exhausted. Any intention to fight a legendary monster in that state was not courage, but suicide.

Wuya walked in front, with Rody and Diane following closely behind.

Their way forward that time was safe, and the terrible monsters of the forest did not appear. During this time, Rody had a complicated feeling in his heart. He did not know whether he was wishing for some powerful monsters to appear and kill Wuya or

that he could safely reach his destination.

From the spaces between the leaves, they were able to see that the sky was gradually becoming darker. The three of them had actually been walking for the entire day.

Rody and Diane had been moving around since the previous day and were extremely exhausted. They have had nothing to drink or eat. The injuries on their body seemed to get worse as they staggered forward. Besides that, the two of them were still covered in sludge. Rody, who still had some sludge in his mouth and nose, was in a particularly sorry plight.

Wuya saw that the two of them had slowed down and told them, "It is better if you all walk faster. The forest is safer during the day and only a few monsters will appear. However, in the evening, more monsters will start to come out."

Rody took a deep breath as he thought of the large monsters earlier. He could not help but give a wry smile and asked, "Daytime is 'safer'?"

Having said that, Rody still believed Wuya. He began to walk faster as he pulled Diane and moved forward.

As they walked in front, the number of trees started to decrease and finally, they arrived at an open field. Although the dense grass on the field only covered a small area, it reminded Rody of the grasslands in the Northwest.

"We have arrived!" Wuya stopped walking. He sounded excited.

"Didn't you say that there is a tree as tall as a hill?" Rody asked as he opened his eyes wide.

Wuya ignored Rody. He slowly lowered his head and placed both of his hands together. Then, he suddenly opened up his arms. Rody once again felt dizzy as the space in front of him became distorted. Just when he was stunned, he saw a crack in the space.

Wuya started to sweat. He continued chanting and his mouth

started to move faster and faster. The crack also slowly opened up and became bigger. Rody and Diane suddenly exclaimed when they heard a cracking sound. The crack had finally opened up and turned into numerous lights which immediately disappeared.

Presented right in front of Rody was a huge tree trunk.

That tree trunk was so huge that it was hard to imagine... The black trunk was like black iron. Rody sighed. "Incredible... I once thought that the tree that needed ten people to hug was large but... this tree will need more than a few hundred people to hug it... Scary, really scary!"

The tree was like a huge opened umbrella. The large branches spread in all directions. The astonishing thing was that its trunk, branches, and leaves were all black in color.

Rody raised his head to look up. That tree was so tall that it was hard to imagine. Its trunk seemed to have pierced the sky... It was so tall that the eyes could barely see the top.

Rody sighed and said, "No wonder the Mystic Dragon was sealed for more than a thousand years. With such a large tree pressing on it, not to say that it was unable to run, it could have even been crushed to death..."

Wuya stood at a side and felt relieved. He gently waved his sleeves, and both Rody and Diane felt a strong gust of wind. The wind carried them involuntarily to the side of the tree.

The three of them then walked for a while to the other side of the tree. There they saw the stone statue of a huge monster. Behind the statue was a large stone gate.

The statue was magnificent. It looked like a strange and fierce monster. However, Rody did not know what it was. Its body looked like a lion crouching. Its thick mane was like a burning flame. However, it had the head of a man and long hair that hung down on both sides of its face. It had a serious face, and there was

even a crown on its head.

Wuya then slowly said, “This is the place!” He then coldly looked at Rody.

Rody gave a wry smile. “You mean it is time to use our blood?”

Wuya nodded. He pointed at the statue and explained, “The two of you, go and smear your blood on the eyes of this statue! Remember to be fast! According to legend, the blood must be fresh and must not have left the human's body for more than an hour.”

Rody had already stepped back, and he asked softly, “What would happen if we do not smear our blood?”

Wuya gave a cold smile and replied, “Why don't you go and try?”

Rody thought for a moment and slowly approached the statue. He stretched out his hands to touch the stone gate behind the statue.

Suddenly, he heard a roar and the statue seemed to come alive and roared like a lion. At that same time, Rody felt like his hands were struck by lightning. A great force knocked him out. He flew for quite a distance before falling hard on the ground.

Rody struggled for a while. He sat up and spat out a mouthful of grass. He then cursed, “What the hell?”

Wuya watched Rody struggle to get back up and lightly said, “This is the place that was sealed by a spell. Naturally, nobody will be able to enter. The last time I came here, I tried to use brute force to break in. However, I ended up injured and had to shed my skin twice to recover.”

“Shed your skin?” Rody suddenly understood why Wuya looked so old two days ago. He sighed, “So you were shedding your skin. I thought someone had cast some kind of evil magic on you.”

Wuya ignored Rody, turned his attention to Diane and told her, “You go first. You just need to cut your finger and smear a little bit

of your blood on one of its eyes.”

Diane’s expression changed slightly, and she gave a weird look. She took a deep breath and then slowly walked towards the stone statue. When she reached the side of the stone statue, she took out a small curved dagger. Suddenly, with a soft shout, she held the dagger by its hilt and hacked at the stone statue.

Wuya watched coldly from one side as if he knew all along that she would do that. However, he never had the intention to try and stop her.

The dagger in Diane’s hands turned into debris before it could even cut the stone statue. Diane cried out as she was flung away. Incidentally, she landed beside Rody.

Wuya coldly asked, “Are you satisfied now? Do you think you can stop me?”

Diane struggled to get up and gritted her teeth. “I am from the Silvermoon Clan. Our mission is to guard this place! I absolutely cannot allow you to revive the Mystic Dragon!”

Wuya lightly replied, “Your Silvermoon Clan is really stubborn. I knew from the start that you would not be so obedient. I had also wanted to destroy that stone statue the last time I came here. However, I was unable to do it. What makes you think you can do it?”

As Wuya spoke, he stretched out one of his hands. Diane shouted out in fear. She then floated and involuntarily flew towards Wuya.

Wuya then grabbed Diane’s neck as if he was holding a chicken. Diane struggled desperately. However, she was powerless before Wuya. Wuya then stretched out his other hand and, with one finger, gently drew something on Diane’s neck. A shallow wound immediately appeared on her neck and blood started to flow out. Wuya dabbed his finger on a drop of her blood and accurately flicked it onto one of the statue’s eyes.

After that, Wuya released Diane and she immediately fell to the ground. Wuya then said, “I already said I will not kill indiscriminately. However, if you were to create trouble, do you think that I, Jormungandr, do not dare to kill a Kara clansman?”

He then looked at Rody and said, “It is your turn!”

Diane suddenly jumped up from the ground and threw the red crystal-like object to Rody. She then shouted, “Quickly run! If you use this, you can become invisible! He will not be able to catch you. You must not let him succeed!”

Rody took the crystal-like object but he did not move. He coldly looked at Wuya and then he looked at Diane before saying, “There is no use... Wuya does not need to use his eyes. Weren’t you injured by him on the mountain last night?”

Rody walked up to the stone statue in big strides. He used that crystal-like object to pierce his fingers. He then used a drop of his blood and smeared it on the other eye of the statue.

The ground shook slightly, and the statue of the beast became distorted. After that, the stone statue came to life and its original crouching body stood up. First, it shook its shoulders. After that, it opened its big mouth wide and gave a long yawn.

It lazily opened its eyes and looked at the three people in front of him, then gave a terrifying loud roar. However, these three people had already witnessed a lot of things during their journey. Even though the stone statue gave a mighty roar, they were not overly surprised.

That stone statue looked somewhat dispirited and had a helpless expression. It then sighed. “Ah, it has been a few hundred years since I last had visitors...”

Chapter 125: Strange Human Faced Lion

There was a faint sigh and the voice seemed to come from the depths of hell. “It has been a few hundred years since I last had visitors...”

Wuya's normally cold face looked agitated. He could not help but walk two steps forward.

“Eh? Aren’t you the large snake?” The stone statue looked at Wuya and laughed. “Why are you here?”

Wuya glared at the stone statue and demanded, “Enough nonsense, Gatekeeper! Open the door!”

The stone statue opened its mouth and roared loudly. A strong wind blew out causing the grass to sway. Wuya’s clothes also fluttered but his face remained indifferent.

“Damn you! You dare call me a Gatekeeper?” The stone statue bellowed, revealing a mouth full of sharp fangs. “You long-tailed snake, you dare call me that!”

Wuya looked at him and coldly said, “Enough nonsense, you weird-headed lion. I have already fulfilled the conditions to wake you up. Quickly open the door!”

“Wu...” The stone statue gave a soft roar and slowly sat down. He then said, “Fine! In that case, answer my question correctly and I will let you pass!”

“Questions?” Wuya frowned. “What questions? I still need to answer questions?”

Rody quietly walked a few steps forward and stood a distance away from the side of Wuya. He laughed loudly, “Wuya, don’t you know the teachings of God? If you want to pass through the Sphinx, you must answer its riddles.”

“Bastard! What did you say?” Wuya became angry. “What

teachings? You are just a Protoss watchdog!”

Sphinx raised its head and roared loudly. Its roar was so loud that Rody could not help but cover his ears.

“Insolent large snake! If you dare insult me, the Sphinx, again, I will eat you up!” It then growled loudly from its throat. “Well! Enough nonsense! Do not disturb my rest! Whoever can answer my question, I will let him in!”

Wuya shouted loudly, “No! This is not right! The ancient texts of the Silvermoon Clan did not say anything about this!”

Sphinx ignored him and shouted, “What animal walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three legs at night? The more legs he has, the slower and weaker he is!”

The moment Rody heard the first sentence, he was already laughing to himself. This riddle again. It is the same riddle as the one in the records. Doesn’t this guy know how to change the riddle after hundreds of years?

In accordance to the classics about the God in the church, the Sphinx was a mythological animal that guarded the gates. To get past it, one must first answer its riddle. According to the records, that Sphinx's favorite question was the one he just asked.

Rody waited confidently for Sphinx to finish its riddle. While Wuya was frowning and thinking, Rody hesitated for a moment and answered, “Humans! The answer is humans!”

Sphinx roared loudly. After that, it angrily whispered, “Correct! This human has given the right answer. You may enter!”

As soon as it finished that sentence, Rody felt like he was grabbed in mid-air and involuntarily pushed towards the stone door.

Wuya roared in anger, “Bastard! I am the one who is supposed to go in!” His figure flashed as he rushed towards the stone door.

Sphinx roared again. Before Rody could clearly see what actually

happened, there was the sound of a large explosion and Wuya was thrown back. Sphinx's voice then resounded again, "Those who have not answered the riddle are not allowed to go in!"

Wuya got up from the ground, looking extremely angry. He gave a shout and his body was immediately wrapped in a white light. His body transformed within the dazzling light. Wuya's figure got bigger and bigger. Finally, with a roar, Wuya disappeared. In its place was a large snake, with its ten heads, hissing at Sphinx.

One of the snake heads opened its large mouth and shot out a stream of fire at Sphinx. Sphinx responded with a resounding roar. The invisible sound waves extinguished the flames! Sphinx then shouted, "How dare you, a despicable snake, be rude to me, the great Sphinx! Even the Mystic Dragon had to be polite to me!" After that, Sphinx roared again and the snake was struck by lightning. The snake was flung away, and it severely crashed into some trees at the edge of the grassland.

The large snake hissed and turned back into a human. Wuya then struggled to get up from the ground. Before he could stand firmly, he spat out blood. Wuya then glared at Sphinx. Suddenly, he opened his mouth and spat out a small and shiny square shaped object.

Rody immediately heard Andy shout, "This is it! I can feel that the strong aura comes from the top of this thing! Shit! I initially thought that it was Wuya's aura!"

Sphinx looked disturbed and commented, "Dragon's tooth! You actually have the Mystic Dragon's tooth!"

Wuya was ghastly pale and had a ferocious expression. He no longer looked like the calm Chief of the Flame Tribe. Wuya glared at Sphinx. He slowly stretched out his hands, wrapping the dragon's tooth in his palms. In a burst of fire, the dragon's tooth in his palms was transformed into a sharp longsword.

"Sphinx, are you going to let me in?" Wuya whispered as he held

the hilt with both hands.

Rody could feel the imposing, oppressive presence even from behind the stone statue, smacking him right in the face. The murderous intent gave off a very violent aura, even stinging his skin.

Sphinx looked up and roared, “Do you think, I, the great Sphinx, would fear you just because you have a dragon’s tooth. You are just a despicable snake! I am God’s most loyal servant! Bring it on!”

Wuya gritted his teeth and shouted, “No matter what, I am definitely going in there today! To hell with you!” Wuya did not seem to take any action. But suddenly, his body disappeared from that place. In a flash of white light, he reappeared in front of the Sphinx and with that dragon's tooth giant longsword, he proceeded to slash down on the Sphinx's head.

Sphinx let out a thunderous roar and a white light screen appeared in front of it. The light covered the entire giant tree, together with Sphinx and Rody inside.

The flaming sword had slashed onto the light screen and caused a strong shockwave, but it was unable to penetrate it.

Sphinx roared again. Wuya took two steps back, caught his breath and then spat out some blood. After that, he threw himself forward as he slashed again at the light screen. Sphinx roared even more violently but the light screen seemed to be dimmer now. Wuya did not step back this time around, even though he spat out blood again.

Wuya's face was deathly pale. The veins in his skin were clearly visible, giving his face a hideous and fierce look.

“Boy, why are you still watching? Quickly go in!” Andy reminded Rody. He immediately ran to the stone gate, and it opened automatically. At that moment, Rody heard a loud crash behind him. However, he did not dare to look back and quickly rushed

inside the giant tree trunk.

The moment Rody walked in, the gate immediately closed behind him. There was no light inside the giant tree trunk, but Rody could faintly feel the vibrations from outside the tree. Wuya and Sphinx were still battling fiercely outside.

Since he could not see, Rody felt his way around. There were walls on both sides. He pushed ahead as he groped with his hands, stumbling into open space. He then kept going forward step by step in the dark. However, he stepped into a void and fell down.

That hole in the tree was actually a passageway. The slope Rody fell on was also unexpectedly steep. He rolled all the way down and bumped so much that he ached all over and was extremely dizzy. His body was already weak before this. So, even though he managed to grab two withered vines along the way, he could not hold on to them and could only continue to roll down.

Finally, Rody rolled into a pool of water at the bottom. He accidentally swallowed a few mouthfuls of water before he stood up. The pool of water was not too deep and only reached up to Rody's thighs when he stood up. However, the water was extremely cold. Rody trembled from the cold as a faint wind blew onto his wet body.

In the dark, he slowly walked against the direction of the wind. This time, he was more alert and tested his footing before walking forward as he was afraid of falling and rolling down again.

After a short distance, Rody had stepped out of the pool and onto dry land. A strange thing happened. Rody's injuries that had soaked in that pool of water started to feel better and now no longer hurt. Instead, they started to feel itchy. Rody did not hurry ahead. He returned to the pool of water and sat there, totally immersing himself. He then started washing away the sludge in his nose and mouth. It felt extremely comfortable and there was no longer a disgusting taste in his mouth.

His mind even felt extremely refreshed and his whole body felt lighter. It was as if he could fly.

There is something weird about this water. The moment Rody thought of that, Andy spoke, "Boy. This seems to be holy water. You are bathing in holy water. Such good fortune. Even the Pope never had anything this extravagant."

"Holy water?" Rody froze for a moment. He then took off his clothes and carefully touched his wounds. Instead of wounds, he found that the skin was smooth and his injuries had healed.

"It really is holy water." Rody sighed. When he was injured in the army, they had treated him with holy water. However, holy water is extremely valuable and was something that ordinary people could not afford to use. Holy water was not only used to treat injuries but could also be used to replenish the magic power of sorcerers and magicians.

Rody sighed and gave a wry smile. "Unfortunately, I am neither a sorcerer nor a magician. This holy water cannot replenish my fighting energy." After that, Rody stood up and walked away, shaking his head.

"Hm?" After walking a little in the dark, Rody saw some light in a distance. Rody then asked, "What is that? Could it be the Mystic Dragon?"

Andy then replied in his mind, "What do you think? Aren't you the one that cut ahead of the line and entered earlier than Wuya? Are you trying to be a Dragon Slayer?"

Rody replied, "I don't know. Kill the dragon? Don't joke around. Who am I to think that I can kill a dragon? Especially since the dragon here is the Mystic Dragon that even challenged the Gods. Even Wuya could easily kill me, let alone the Mystic Dragon.

"Hmm, so you still know your place, boy. What were you trying to do by entering this place?"

Rody shook his head and was caught off guard when he knocked the side of a wall. He gave a wry smile as he nursed his head and replied, “I told you. I do not know. I just wanted to prevent Wuya from entering. If he manages to revive the dragon, would we still have a future? Have you never read the religious classics? [Mystic Dragon. His name has the word mystic and would probably not be a good thing.](#) Don’t you think that there would be chaos if he enters the human world?”

“Hahahaha.” Andy laughed heartily. “You really have a lofty way of thinking, but what will you do now? How are you going to get out of here?”

Rody shook his head and replied, “Doesn’t matter. Let us go in first before we talk about it. Maybe that dragon is asleep and I can get rid of it with one stroke of my sword.”

“I think you are going to get killed.”

Rody lightly replied, “If I am courting death then so be it. Either way, it is good as long as Wuya cannot get in here. That way the Mystic Dragon cannot be revived.”

Andy was silent for a moment before asking, “Boy, are you serious about this? Are you not afraid of death?”

“Hmph.” Rody continued to walk as he replied softly, “Who is not afraid? However, we must keep moving forward. Once we can no longer move forward, we will die. In short, I will not stand by and just watch Wuya revive the Mystic Dragon!”

“I really can’t tell if you are a great man or just an idiot,” Andy muttered.

The light in front of him started to get nearer. Rody’s footsteps also became lighter and lighter. After a few more steps, Rody was shocked. The passageway was filled with magnificent radiance.

A variety of colorful gems could be found on both sides of the walls, on the ground and even the ceiling. These gems emitted a

dazzling brilliance and each of them was the size of an egg.

Rody's mouth gaped open for a long time and then he sighed. "Good heavens! There are so many gems here! If we brought them outside, we could make a fortune!"

Rody could not help but lightly hold onto the uneven walls. Putting his hands around a gem, he pulled lightly and it came off the wall! Rody then exclaimed as he looked at the gem in his hands and smiled. "Andy. I am rich! Do you think this gem is worth two thousand gold coins?"

Andy sneered. "You are the Duke of the Tulip Family. A mere one or two thousand gold coins is nothing to you!"

Rody gave a supercilious look and replied, "What Duke? I am just an impostor. When I stopped becoming a Duke, this gem would be extremely valuable!"

Rody thought to himself for a moment and then he kept the gem at his chest. After that, he thought of pulling out more gems when he suddenly gave a wry smile and said, "I am really stupid. Right now, I do not know if I would survive! What is the use of these things?" Rody then laughed and continued forward without looking anymore at the gems on the wall.

After walking for a while he asked, "Andy. Why do you think there are so many gems here?"

"I heard that dragons are greedy beings. They like sparkling things like diamond, gold and various other gems.

"This place is where that dragon is imprisoned. This is where they put him to sleep. In fact, for this so-called imprisonment, the gems were placed here to coax the dragon to sleep. Have you seen people who coax their children to sleep by letting their children hold their favorite toy? They used the same principle to coax the dragon to sleep."

Rody took a deep breath and gave a wry smile as he said, "I hope

that the dragon does not think that I stole his toy from the gem I grabbed. I know that children are absolutely relentless against people who take their toys.”

The passageway slowly moved down the further they went. More and more gems could also be found on the walls. Finally, the walls were completely covered in gems. The gems were also larger and shined so brilliantly that people could hardly keep their eyes opened.

Rody suddenly stopped and shouted, “No!”

Andy was shocked and angrily said, “Have you gone mad?”

Rody stood still with a pale face and whispered, “I suddenly remembered Sphinx’s words. Have you noticed it?”

“What words? That Sphinx said a lot of things.”

Rody took a deep breath and replied, “His first sentence... The words he said when he just woke up...”

Andy coldly replied, “What about that sentence? I remember that he said that this was the first visitor he had in a few hundred years. What is wrong with that?”

Rody gave a peculiar expression. His voice was also a little bit strange. “Have you not thought about it? Andy. His first few words were ‘a few hundred years’...”

Andy was silent for a moment and then his voice also started to sound weird. “That’s right... according to the legend, the Mystic Dragon should have been sealed thousands of years ago. The Silvermoon Clan had also guarded this valley for thousands of years. However, Sphinx’s words were...”

Rody whispered, “It has been a few hundred years since I last had visitors...” Then it dawned on him, and he said with a tremulous smile, “That means a few hundred years ago... someone was here.”

Mystic Dragon in the chinese raw is mo long. The ‘mo’ can mean

magic, mystic or evil. As Wuya had accused that ‘it was just like his despicable enemies to call that place the Summit of Evil’. It implies that Wuya does not consider himself or his parent/master evil. Hence, the dragon’s name cannot be Evil Dragon. At the same time, ‘mo’ could also mean evil and is obviously not a ‘good thing’ as claimed by Rody.

Chapter 126: History's Strongest Fatty

Walking down the passageway, Rody saw the exit in front. However, Rody did not know what he would find the moment he walked out. Would it be a sleeping dragon or something else?

Rody took a deep breath and slowly walked out. The moment he stepped outside, he immediately felt like he had hit an invisible whirlpool. His body involuntarily bounced a few steps back.

“Huh?”

“Boy, be careful. This looks like a boundary!” Andy warned vigilantly.

Rody took a deep breath and concentrated as he started to walk out again. He then felt a force assaulting his body. He tried to push himself forward and felt as if he was facing the wind. He also felt like he was wrapped by a layer of warm water, and that feeling was very comfortable.

Andy called out in his mind, “This boundary is weird... boy, you...”

The voice in his head stopped as if a knife had cut away Andy's voice. Rody suddenly felt the force holding him vanish. He felt himself plunge forward a few steps and thus entered that cavern.

Taking a good look, he noticed that this cavern looked similar to the cave he was in when he was attacked by the large snake. However, this cavern was a little bit bigger. The cavern was full of large and small boulders. The first thing that Rody saw in front of him was a pile of gems that were piled up like a mountain in the cavern.

The mountain of gems emitted a dazzling light and almost blinded Rody. He quickly looked away and did not dare to look directly at the gems. When he turned his head, he immediately saw that at the distant edge of the cavern was not a wall, but rather a

gap. It was a Gate to the Abyss.

After that, Rody heard a faint roar and could not help but walk forward. Standing in front of the abyss, he looked down. With that look, Rody could not help but breathe in the cold air.

He gazed into the abyss and found crimson magma surging turbulently. The magma was not throwing out flames. Instead, it was raging, back and forth, and emitting traces of smoke.

“Strange...” Rody could not help but murmur. “The magma is just underneath but why is it not hot standing here?”

Rody thought to himself and called out to Andy but he did not get any response. Rody started to feel uneasy and repeatedly called out to Andy. However, there was still no response.

Shit! Is this because of that boundary?

Rody nervously looked around. However, this was a dead end. Other than the gap he entered from, there were no other exits. The ceiling had some strange stone bells, hung upside down, and glimmering faintly. The surrounding wall was also full of large gems. The whole cavern was like a legendary storage for treasure.

“Hey!” Rody shouted, “Is anyone here? Whether you are a person or a beast, answer me!”

“Is there anyone here?” Rody whispered, “Anyone here? What about that dragon?” Rody suddenly looked back at the abyss and thought, Maybe the Mystic Dragon is in that abyss... Maybe, it is really hiding inside that blazing hot magma.

Rody thought for a moment and walked back to the abyss. He then picked up a stone and wanted to drop the stone into the abyss.

Rody stretched his hands out but just before he dropped the stone, he heard a languid voice behind him.

“I would not do that if I were you!”

Rody looked back and saw a person, lazily half-lying down on a

boulder.

“Who?” Rody discarded the stone and walked towards the man behind him. However, he was vigilant. There was no one on that boulder earlier. Where did he suddenly come from?

That man stood up on the boulder and stretched his waist. After that, he loudly said, “Interesting. After so long, someone has finally come down here. How come that lion let you in? Did you defeat him?” He looked at Rody for a moment. After that, he shook his head and said, “No, you are not strong enough. You definitely would not be able to defeat that old lion... Hey, how did you come in here?”

As he spoke, the man jumped down from the boulder. His body was like a goose that slowly floated down and stood in front of Rody.

He then looked at Rody and smiled. “Hi! [My name is Sky](#). Who are you?”

Rody stared at the person in front of him. The man had just jumped down from a boulder that was seven to eight meters high. Instead of falling, the man floated down like a leaf. That already stunned Rody.

However, such gracefulness did not suit Sky’s chunky appearance.

Rody did not want to say that he was too fat, but he was like some animals who only knew how to eat and sleep. In fact, pigs were thinner compared to him. His two short legs were like tree stumps and his waist looked like a bucket. His neck was so short that it was almost hidden. His head was large enough to make others ignore his obese body. Rody swore to God (even though he never believed in God) that he had never met anyone whose head could be so big.

His face was flat like the bottom of a cauldron. His pair of eyes were so small that people could barely notice them as they just

looked like two thin cracks. As for his nose, one could barely recognize it as a nose. It was as if his nose had caved in after being punched and only two holes remained for respiration.

His mouth was so wide that it was scary. Rody was sure that if the man laughed, his smile would reach from ear to ear.

It was amazing for such an extremely fat person to have such a light and graceful movement. Rody found it hard to comprehend because he could not imagine an obese person, the size of seven to eight pigs combined, casually floating in the air.

“My... my name is Rody,” Rody froze for a moment before saying his name.

Sky carefully looked at Rody and laughed. “Boy, how did you get in here? You spoke in the Protoss language, then you must be a descendant of Protoss, right? Good! The ones I hate are Kara’s people. You are not one of Kara’s people! Very good!” As he spoke, the man circled around Rody and then he pulled Rody by his hand and led him to a mountain of gems.

Rody felt like a helpless puppet being pulled by Sky. He heard Sky laugh. “Boy, I have not met anyone for many years. This is very good! Take any gem you like. Consider them my gift to you!”

Rody finally recovered from the shock. He broke away from Sky’s grip and retreated a few steps. He then asked, “What are you? Are you a human or... are you that Mystic Dragon?”

Sky froze for a moment before he laughed out loud. He laughed as if he had just heard the most ridiculous joke ever. He pointed at Rody and gasped for air, “Did you said that I am the Mystic Dragon? Do you actually think that I am that reptile? Do I really look like that overgrown lizard?”

Before Rody could reply, Sky stopped laughing and raised his neck. “Don’t compare me to that overgrown lizard! I am a real human! I am a human like you!” At that moment, the fatty lowered

his voice and showed a puzzled expression. He then said to himself, “Huh? Am I really the same? It seems like there are some differences. Humans cannot live for a few hundred years... does that mean I am not human? Ah, this question gives me a headache!”

Rody exclaimed. “A few hundred... A few hundred years? Did you just say that you have lived for a few hundred years?”

Sky responded, “Of course. I have been in this cave for a few hundreds of years, and I am still not dead!”

Rody’s mouth hung open and he thought to himself, Monster! Monster! Another monster! Why do I keep encountering monsters that are several hundred years old?

“Then... how did you survive these past few hundred years? What have you been eating and drinking? Why are you here?”

Sky pursed his lips and replied, “What did I eat or drink? Hmph. Once you have reached my level of skill, there is no need for those things. As for why I am still here, you must first tell me the reason you are here.”

Rody gave a wry smile. He understood that this man had been in here for several hundred years and was not able to talk to others in an orderly way. Rody thought for a moment and told Sky about what had happened to him. When Sky heard the story, he became high spirited. When he heard about Wuya fighting Sphinx, he showed a curious expression and asked, “Really? That large snake was really fighting that old lion and it was hard to determine the winner? It seems like that snake’s cultivation was also quite good...”

Rody kept quiet and looked at Sky. Sky then asked, “In that case, why did you come here? Ah, it must be to kill the dragon. Am I right? I know a lot of people who had nothing better to do than to look for trouble and try to kill the dragon. They just want to show off. However, your strength is too weak. You will not be able to

fight that dragon...” Sky carefully looked at Rody again and murmured, “No, you cannot. The difference is too big. The dragon’s flames will burn you to ashes... Your fighting energy will be of no use. You have not practiced how to condense the air. You do not even have the abilities to escape... Terrible...”

Rody could not help but frown, and he asked, “What about you? Why are you here?”

Sky laughed and replied, “Me? Last time, I had heard of this legendary place and came here out of curiosity. I had also encountered the spiders and the large monsters outside. They were interesting but were too weak. The lion at the entrance was no threat to me. In the beginning, he was guarding the gate and did not want to let me in. He insisted that I get him someone’s blood. I was impatient and beat him up until he cried for mercy. After that, I forced my way in.”

“You beat up Sphinx until he cried for mercy?” Rody looked at the fatty in front of him. Sky certainly did not look like a master...

Sky’s eyes grew wide and exclaimed, “You do not believe me? Haha, very simple. Let us go out right now and I will beat up the lion in front of you.”

Rody gulped. He felt like everything he had encountered that day were all inconceivable things. Right now, the large snake that had cultivated for a 1000 years could not deal with that lion. Sh*t! Both of them were legendary Mythical Beasts. However, the fatty in front of him said he could make the Sphinx cry for mercy.

Sky then became dejected and sighed. “Although I came in here, I did something wrong... I heard that there is a Mystic Dragon here. I wanted to see how powerful was that legendary figure who could challenge the Gods. As a result, I forced my way in, but something bad...”

Rody became frightened and asked, “Did the Mystic Dragon escape?”

"Of course not!" Sky glared at Rody and continued, "I am here. How could it escape?" He paused for a moment and his face showed a helpless expression. "That reminds me, it makes sense why the lion did not want to let me come in here. According to the lion, the blood of two different clansmen must be offered and an ancient spell must be chanted to revive the Mystic Dragon and restore its power. Unfortunately, I was impatient. I did not know how to chant the spell, and I did not even know where to find Kara's clansmen...Kara's clansmen had supposedly gone extinct a 1000 years ago. Where was I supposed to find them? That was why I had no choice but to force my way in."

"What was the result?"

Sky gave a wry smile and said, "The result was that the Mystic Dragon had been revived but... not quite..." Sky sighed and continued, "Legend says that the Mystic Dragon was strong enough to challenge the Gods. However, if it was not revived the proper way, it would not be as strong and would only be a Mythical Beast without a sense of self."

Rody felt his heart jump wildly and could not help but ask again, "So... you revived it?"

Sky gave a wry smile and replied, "Yes, revived..."

Rody could not help but whisper, "Oh my God... You really revived it... Who are you? Don't you know the consequences of reviving the Mystic Dragon?"

Sky shook his head and replied, "What consequences? I have been here for hundreds of years doing nothing but sleeping. When I was awake, I would ask the dragon for a fight as a form of exercise... I didn't feel anything wrong."

"Just to fight... as a form of exercise?" Rody's expression looked like he had just been cut by a knife.

Tian (Sky) Lie (Violent). Pronounced Ti-en Li-e. The closest name

I got from baby names is Thierry which still sounds very far off. A google image search found several things I cannot recognize and a sword that seemed like Kamen Rider weapon. After more searching, I found that it was the weapon of Solar Pyro Warrior(?) from Armor Hero. The weapon's name had another two more characters besides Tien Lie but it ended up as something like 'Armor Penetrator'. I decided to just use Sky.

Chapter 127: Powerful Domain

“You don’t believe me?” Sky seemed greatly insulted. He suddenly raised his voice and cried out, “ I am Sky! Who do you think I am? Why should I lie to a boy like you? You wait!”

Before Rody could speak, Sky swung his arms. Rody then felt himself being thrown back by a powerful force. He crashed hard onto the ground. Sky put both his hands on his chest and suddenly a human shadow appeared. The shadow looked as if his body had been enlarged several times. Rody felt his body shake. It was as if a powerful force had distorted the space in front of him. The powerful force was like a large and invisible hand, violently tearing Rody’s body. Suddenly, his body stiffened, and he was unable to move his whole body, not even a single finger. He could feel a severe pain all over his body and could feel like his heart was being torn to pieces. He could not help but groan in pain and almost spat out a mouthful of blood.

Sky then suddenly said, “Ah! I forgot that your strength is too weak and cannot withstand my domain.” He then shot out a light to cover Rody. Rody suddenly felt that the powerful force that was tearing his body apart had suddenly disappeared. He breathed heavily and felt like collapsing. At that time, Andy, who had been cut off, suddenly spoke in his mind. “Domain Force! Boy! This is domain force!”

Andy continued to shout, “This guy is really a top ranked practitioner! He has already obtained ‘Domain Force’!”

“Shut up, Andy!” Rody could not help but reply in a soft voice. “Why didn’t you say anything earlier?”

Andy helplessly replied, “This stupid cavern has a boundary. All my magic does not work properly here! Our connection also relied on the magic in your mask. However, as a result of that fatty’s ‘Domain Force’, the boundary was broken.

Rody took a deep breath. He looked at Sky not far from him and showed a complicated expression. “Is this really the ‘Domain Force’?”

At that moment, Rody felt as if he had returned to the time when he was just a low ranked warrior in the Imperial Capital. The time when he saw Master Autumn's display of swordsmanship and exclaimed in astonishment. In the past six months, his strength had grown so much and he even became famous in the Northwest Region. As a high ranked warrior, he was already considered a master in the eyes of the ordinary people. Even if he encountered high-level practitioners like the Black Veil Saint, Rody believed that he would at least have the strength to fight back even if he could not win.

However, the moment he saw Sky summon a ‘Domain Force’, Rody felt extremely powerless. That made him feel empty and uncomfortable. When he was facing Sky, he was just an extremely low leveled practitioner. A master of ‘Domain Force’ could easily kill him by just lifting a finger. Just now, Sky only made some motions and he was almost killed by the pressure from the domain force.

Sky's entire body was covered in a flaming aura. The flaming aura was far more vibrant compared to Rody's ‘Holy Light’. Besides that, the flame was also pure silvery white. The white flame flickered and Sky's entire body emitted an extremely strong power. His fatty image had disappeared and was replaced by a proud looking world's greatest master.

There was a continuous rumbling sound as the stones on the floor broke into pieces. The large boulder also could not withstand Sky's ‘Domain Force’ and was broken into pieces.

There were countless pebbles that quietly floated above the ground and were suspended in midair. There was a strange formation as Sky stood in the center with many dazzling gems surrounding him. It was like he was surrounded by a strange battle

formation.

Sky suddenly looked up and shouted. Rody felt a violent quake that rammed his body. His ears suddenly felt a very sharp pain and Rody could not help but cover his ears.

Sky continued his shouts as he raised one of his legs and he forcefully stomped on the ground...

The whole cave trembled from the impact. The stone bells which were at the ceiling of the cavern started to fall down. Sky's loud laughter filled the cavern and he shouted, "Come out!"

Sky once again forcefully stomped his foot on the ground. The cavern vibrated incessantly. Rody was unable to stand firmly. He staggered and held on to a boulder beside him for support.

Suddenly, Rody heard a roar coming from the abyss. A huge wave of magma splashed ten meters high from the abyss. The red magma had splashed all over. The high waves of magma splattered at the surrounding boulders and they started to emit black smoke.

Waves after waves of magma continued to be tossed up. The waves became more and more vicious. Suddenly, there was a resounding long howl in the cavern. A huge figure separated the waves and jumped out of a pool of magma. It then landed heavily on the ground, right in front of the Abyss.

When the figure jumped up, he spilled a bit of magma which emitted a sizzling sound.

The huge figure had a long neck and a massive head. It opened its big mouth and roared loudly. Then it lowered its head. Its two red eyes glared at Sky as it continued to growl angrily.

Rody opened his mouth wide as he watched the confrontation between Sky and the huge monster. "Is this the legendary Mystic Dragon?"

The Mystic Dragon really lived up to the name of 'dragon'. Its heavy body had a long tail. The long tail was spiky like a meat

tenderizer. Its huge body was covered in black scales, with a pair of large wings on its back. It breathed heavily and brought along waves of violent wind. On its large head was a sharp horn. Unlike the rest of its body, the horn was white. It stood on two legs and brandished its claws at Sky. It also opened its mouth to breathe out fire.

The Mystic Dragon was much bigger than the large snake that Wuya had transformed into. However, Rody had some doubts. That was because he could not see any differences between the legendary Mystic Dragon and an ordinary dragon described in books. Was this really the Mystic Dragon that once challenged the Gods?

“Idiot! Don't tell me that you cannot see?” Andy could not help but call out.

“What?”

“Where is the dragon standing right now? It is standing right in front of that fatty! It is standing inside the ‘Domain Field’, but the ‘Domain Field’ doesn’t seem to affect him at all.

Rody then realized and understood.

Under the powerful strength of the 'Domain Force', the surrounding several meters high boulders had all broken into pieces. The whole cave was also shaking. The dragon ignored all that and brandished its claws as it slowly approached Sky. However, as it breathed out fire, it vigilantly observed Sky. It was apprehensive of Sky and it did not immediately charge forward.

“Be careful, this guy is getting angry.” Sky suddenly shouted.

Sure enough, the giant dragon suddenly flapped its wings violently. It caused two, huge, wind blasts which were like the sharp edges of a knife as it slashed out in all directions. Even the huge boulders were shattered into bits.

The two blade-like wind blasts charged towards Sky and he

coldly said, "This trick again!" Sky stretched out one of his hands and a solid-looking light shield appeared. That shield was completely different from the light shield that Rody formed with his fighting energy. That shield was not just sparkling but was solid as well, like a crystal.

Andy whispered, "This is the 'Energy Transformation' that was once stated by Master. This 'Domain Force' master can really do it!"

There was a loud sound that made Rody feel dizzy. The two blades collided against Sky's shield. The collision caused the surrounding walls and gems to break into pieces. The Mystic Dragon lowered its body, stretched its neck and opened its mouth. After that, the dragon breathed out a crimson flame.

Sky then shouted, "I will block it!"

The shield in his hands magically became larger. It became large enough to hide the whole of Sky's body behind it.

The crimson flames splashed on the shield. Sky's body seemed to flash. Although his body did not move, it was as if he was being pushed back by an invisible force. The ground at his feet also started to crack.

The Mystic Dragon roared and continued to breathe out flames.

Sky's body shrunk behind the shield and then he shouted again, "I'll block! I'll block! Sh*t! I will block!"

After breathing out flames about ten times, the dragon started to become exhausted. Its imposing aura also started to grow weaker. The stones on the ground surrounding Sky had all been charred. Sky then laughed heartily. "Haha! Big lizard, are you out of breath? Now, let me teach you a lesson!"

The large shield in his hands transformed into a long giant hammer. Sky then sprang up from the ground and instantly jumped in front of the Mystic Dragon. He then hammered the

Mystic Dragon's head.

The earth shook.

Rody was amazed to see Sky move at a speed his eyes could not follow. Sky appeared just below the Mystic Dragon's nose. He then saw Sky ruthlessly hammer the Mystic Dragon's head.

Even though Sky was huge and fat, he was much smaller in comparison to the Mystic Dragon. It was like a tall and fat mouse standing beside a lion. Besides that, the giant hammer was only like a toothpick to the Mystic Dragon.

Have you ever seen the effect of a person being hammered by a 'toothpick'?

A huge black figure flew out and crashed into the wall. The impact caused the cavern to shake violently. At that moment, Rody almost thought that the cavern would collapse.

The large Mystic Dragon was sent flying by a 'toothpick'!

The Mystic Dragon then stood up from the ground and shook its head. It roared at Sky in anger. Sky felt proud of himself and laughed heartily. "Big lizard, was it comfortable, just now? Haha..."

However, that time Sky had laughed too early. He saw a shadow flashed by as the Mystic Dragon swung its tail. Sky was struck mercilessly. Before he could even cry out, he flew out and crashed into two boulders.

Sky felt like a fly being hit by a fly swatter.

Sky shouted as he climbed out of the pile of gravel. He then shouted angrily, "Good one! You actually learned how to bluff! Prepare to be punished!"

Even without reciting any incantation, the stones on the ground started to float. When Sky waved his hand a countless number of stones severely pelted at the Mystic Dragon. There were big and

small stones. The small stones were the size of an egg while the big ones were the size of several people.

The sound of the stones pelting the Mystic Dragon could be heard. The Mystic Dragon received concentrated pelting from the stones. Although the stones could not smash through the thick scales of the Mystic Dragon, it was enough to make the dragon roar in pain.

Sky seemed like he was addicted to it. He kept waving his hand to pelt more stones onto the Mystic Dragon. As he did that, he laughed.

As Rody continued to watch the scene, he heard Andy whisper in his mind, “Boy, did you see that? This guy does not use any skills or magic to move the stones. Although this could be done with magic, he would need to chant an incantation. It would absolutely not be as easy as the way he did it!”

Rody’s eyes lit up as he asked, “Andy, what happened? Is this because of the so-called 'domain'?”

Andy whispered back, “Boy, this is indeed the 'domain'. Once a person obtained the strong domain, his energy would surpass all the other practitioners. More importantly, they would be considered close to the existence of God.” Andy paused for a moment before continuing. “The so-called close to the existence of God meant they could create a ‘domain’ with their own abilities. Everything in this ‘domain’ would obey the commands of the master of this 'domain'. In this ‘domain’, the master is God! He would easily be able to do anything in his 'domain'!”

Rody’s heart started to race and his depression was swept away. He had a new intention as he watched Sky playfully fight back the Mystic Dragon. He could not help but loudly say, “Andy! I have decided! I definitely want to obtain a powerful 'domain'!”

Andy was silent for a moment and then he laughed bitterly. “This won’t be so easy! Don’t you know that all the people with powerful

domains were all mythological figures? The Empire had not even seen one in centuries. To be able to reach the rank of 'Sacred Swordsman', which is similar to that of Black Veil Saint is already at the top!"

"Oh?" Rody gave a stubborn expression.

Andy sighed and continued, "Do you know this? According to the legend, those people with powerful domains were all strong people that showed disdain for the world and were never defeated!"

Unfortunately, the moment Andy finished that sentence, the person, in front of him, with a powerful domain exhibited a shameful situation.

The Mystic Dragon was beaten until it was furious. Suddenly, it roared and breathed out its crimson flames.

That time the flames were more ferocious than the previous ten times. Sky was caught off guard and could not take out his shield in time. He was hit by the flames head on. He screamed as his body turned into a huge fireball and flew away.

Rody was stunned and could not help but murmur, "This... he seems to have lost."

Andy angrily cursed. "Idiot! His opponent is the Mystic Dragon!"

"Well, in my opinion, the Mystic Dragon is not that great. It does not seem to be much stronger than Wuya!"

"Bullshit! If it was that giant snake, when it stands in that powerful domain, it would have shattered into pieces before the battle started!" Andy shouted hatefully. "Also.... Ah! Be careful!"

The Mystic Dragon had finally noticed Rody. It suddenly roared and then it breathed fire out at Rody.

"Don't block! Quickly run!" Before Andy had even finished speaking, Rody had already jumped away. Although he was weaker than the Mystic Dragon, he was still quite agile. When Rody

jumped out of the way, he saw the location he was standing at was already charred.

“It just breathes out flames! What is so special about it?” Rody rolled on the ground and stood up.

“Idiot! It is not an ordinary flame! It is a dragon’s breath! If you even just touch it, your whole body will be burned to ashes! You... be careful!”

When the Mystic Dragon saw Rody avoided its attack, it flapped its wings to create a gust of sharp wind. Rody felt a powerful aura charge at him. However, at that moment, he felt his body turn stiff and he could barely move. It was as if his whole body was being wrapped in a powerful aura.

He fiercely bit his tongue. The sharp pain stimulated his alertness, but it was already too late to dodge. He used both of his hands to summon a light shield from his ‘Holy Light’.

After that, there was a loud sound as Rody’s shield was crushed. His body then flew out and crashed into the walls of the cavern.

Rody felt like every single bone in his body was broken and he could not even move a finger. After coughing out a few mouthfuls of blood, he felt a trace of pain in his chest while the rest of his body had turned numb.

“Sh*t! Such power! It is much stronger than those huge monsters...” Those were Rody's last thoughts before he fainted. Just before he fainted, he vaguely saw a figure popped out of the gravel and shot towards the Mystic Dragon. The figure was surrounded by a silver aura. The silver figure was like a shooting star, holding a long flaming sword.

The large and small figures collided at each other and then Rody closed his eyes. He heard the continuous roars of the Mystic Dragon and then thought to himself. This place will not collapse, right?

Chapter 128: Dragon Converter

Wuya's white linen robe was tattered and his hands were bloody as he tightly gripped his longsword.

Despite slashing at Sphinx many tens of times, he was still unable to cut through Sphinx's curtain of light. After all, the lion was Protoss' mythological beast. Although its curtain of light was becoming dimmer, it still unwaveringly blocked the way. Wuya felt anxious with the thought that the Duke of the Tulip Family had already gone in for half a day. However, Wuya knew that if he were to force his way in, there could only be two outcomes. The first would be Sphinx becoming exhausted and then Wuya could finally break through the boundary. The second would be that Wuya collapsed out of exhaustion.

At present, the chances of Wuya collapsing first were much higher.

However, Wuya would never give up. He had spent so much time and energy. He was finally so close to reviving His Majesty, the Mystic Dragon. How could he give up now?

Wuya gasped for breath. He only had single intention on his mind. That was the intention to fight.

This time, Wuya no longer rushed forward like the previous times. He held the Dragon's Fang longsword with two hands and glared at Sphinx as he slowly stepped forward.

Before Wuya could make that last strike, there was a loud trembling noise coming from the gate. The giant tree started to shake. Sphinx shouted, "Bastard! He is fighting again! That bastard human!"

Wuya did not understand what Sphinx was talking about but he had already turned stiff with attention. It was because he also heard the roar that came from the gate... That was His Majesty, the

Mystic Dragon.

Has His Majesty awakened?

Rody felt like he was suffocating. He could not help but push away the stones on his chest. Rody then shook his head and opened his eyes. He found himself buried under a messy pile of stones. He was unable to move his right hand. His right arm was most likely injured by the falling rocks. Sh*t! don't tell me, it's broken.

Rody secretly cursed and pushed away the stones on his body with his left hand. Fortunately, the stones were small. Otherwise, without the fighting energy to protect him when he had fainted, the stones could have crushed him to death if they had been slightly larger.

Rody staggered as he struggled to get up and found that his injuries were much more serious than he had imagined. He felt dizzy the moment he stood up, and it was as if his bones were not able to support his body. His legs weakened and he almost fell forward. His forehead was wet as blood continued to drip down his face. There were also numerous wounds on his body, especially his left leg that refused to move as commanded.

Rody gritted his teeth as he endured the pain. His right hand could not move, so he used his left hand to hold the rubble and supported himself. At that moment, the gems in the cavern had already been scattered everywhere. Some of the gems had also already turned to powder.

The Mystic Dragon was weak and collapsed in front. It was whimpering and seemed to be on the verge of dying. Blood flowed out of the cracked dragon scales. The dragon whimpered in a low moan and no longer looked angry. Its original fiery eyes had grown weak and had closed.

Rody looked around, but he could not find Sky.

He sighed as he had not expected the place to collapse due to the

battle. The stone bells that were hanging on the ceiling had also fallen. The wall and the ceiling were filled with terrible cracks. With just the slightest movement, fragments of stones would crumble from above and this made those who saw it feel uneasy.

Rody carefully walked towards the Mystic Dragon. The Mystic Dragon suddenly opened its eyes and roared at Rody. Its roar was filled with deterrence and vigilance. However, its roar was very weak and could only intimidate. Rody sighed as he himself was on the verge of dying.

Rody looked carefully and saw that the Mystic Dragon was severely injured. It had numerous wounds and cracked dragon scales on its body. One of its tremendous wings was also bleeding and there was a hole in it. The dragon was unable to stand up and could only lie down quietly while it bled.

“Will it die?” Rody could not help but ask.

“Die?” Andy’s voice sounded out in his head. “You must be kidding. This is the Mystic Dragon. If it could die that easily, do you think it would be sealed here? It is one of the most powerful life created by God and is immortal. Right now, it is seriously injured and exhausted. However, once it has regained a bit of strength, it would immediately move around actively...”

Rody then remembered the scene of the Mystic Dragon jumping out of the magma. He then gave a bitter laugh and said, “Well, I guess I should just hope that it does not recover. Otherwise, I would be dead.”

Andy suddenly laughed, “Boy! This time you are truly fortunate!”

“What?”

“Dragon’s blood!” Andy’s voice was as excited as a cat that had seen fish. “Dragon’s blood is an extremely good thing! If you smear it on your body, you would be invulnerable! According to the legends, the Sacred Swordsman and Holy Knights of the Roland

Continent liked to smear dragon blood on their weapons and shield as it was more effective than any other enhancement. Those weapons and shield would then be able to repel both physical and magical attacks.

Rody glanced at the distant Mystic Dragon and smiled, “Do you mean that if I were to smear the dragon’s blood all over my body, the Mystic Dragon would not be able to kill me when it recovers?”

That being said, Rody walked up to the Mystic Dragon and said in a low voice, “Hey, Mystic Dragon, since you are not going to die and yet you are bleeding so much, then lend me some of your blood.”

The Mystic Dragon raised its head and roared. Rody was frightened and immediately retreated a few steps. After the dragon had finished its roar, it lowered its head. It no longer roared and could only snort through its nose, giving out a little bit of heat.

Rody no longer hesitated and walked towards the Mystic Dragon. He took off his shirt and smeared the Mystic Dragon’s blood all over his body. He could not reach his back, so he rubbed his back against the Mystic Dragon’s wounds.

The Mystic Dragon suddenly struggled a little and raised its head. It turned its head to Rody and roared loudly with its mouth wide opened.

Rody was immediately alarmed and thought that he was doomed. This is Andy’s fault! It is going to use its dragon’s breath, and my bones would turn into ashes.

Just when Rody was deep in his thoughts, the Mystic Dragon suddenly groaned painfully. It opened its big mouth to spurt out blood, instead of the scary dragon’s breath.

Rody felt as if a bucket of water was poured over him. He no longer needed to smear the dragon’s blood over his body as he was completely soaked in the blood.

The Mystic Dragon once again felt weak and lowered its head. However, its eyes were open as it unwillingly looked at Rody.

The dragon's blood that thoroughly soaked Rody's body had a nauseating stench. However, before Rody could vomit, he felt his wounds begin to itch. He looked down and saw that his injuries were starting to heal. The injuries all started to close up extremely quickly. In a short while, they were completely healed.

"This is amazing!" Rody's eyes were wide open. "This is even more effective than holy water!"

"Of course! Boy, according to the legend, holy water is just magical water used as an offering to the Gods. However, this is the blood of the dragon that challenged the Gods!"

Rody closed his eyes. He started to feel warm and more comfortable as well as an itchy sensation all over his body. He could feel that he was regaining his strength. The pain in his chest had also gradually disappeared. He no longer felt like fainting from the pain when he breathed.

"How is it? Isn't dragon's blood good?" Andy slowly spoke, "There is something even better. Do you want it?"

"What?"

Andy spoke with a strange interest, "Look at the Mystic Dragon. Its whole body is a precious treasure! Its scales can be used to make armor. When an armor made of the dragon's scales is compared to an armor enchanted by the greatest magician in the Empire, the enchanted armor can only be considered as garbage! Besides that, there are also its fangs! You have already seen the sword made out of a dragon's fang used by Wuya. In the whole continent, you could not find a more powerful sword than that. In addition, there is... the horn on its head... a bit weird... it is some kind of element that absorbs energy. It is definitely something good!"

As Andy spoke, his voice became odder. It was as if Andy was

treating the Mystic Dragon as a lamb to be slaughtered.

Andy paused for a moment and then he whispered to Rody, “However, the biggest treasure is the Mystic Dragon itself.”

“What do you mean?”

“Boy...” Andy’s voice became serious. “Do you remember your lightsaber?”

Lightsaber?

Of course, Rody could remember it. The sword itself was very fragile, but when fighting energy was injected into it, the sword became an extremely sharp magic weapon.

Rody remembered what Andy had said and what was written in Dandong’s notes. The lightsaber relied on a strange gem on its hilt. The gem was something that could convert energy. Energy would pass through the gem, and the fragile sword would instantly become extremely sharp.

“What do you mean?” Rody’s mind stirred.

“Boy, right now, you are like that fragile lightsaber. If you want to become very sharp... this dragon is the best energy converting gem. You just need to get this dragon into your body...”

“What? Put this dragon into my body?” Rody suddenly jumped. “Are you asking me to eat it? It... It is too big!”

Chapter 129: Dragon Converter (2)

“Eat it?” Andy sounded helpless. “I really wish I could stuff it inside your dumb head! Try and eat it! Idiot! You think it is some kind of livestock? The reason the Mystic Dragon is immortal is because its flesh is not normal. Its flesh was converted from energy! Using Master Dandong’s words, it is an ‘energy transformer!’”

“Energy transformer?” Rody looked closely at the large monster in front of him and saw all the blood and scales. “Are you saying that this dragon’s body is created by using energy? But... even the fatty could only summon a shield and a hammer out of energy. Isn’t it ridiculous for energy to be able to create flesh and blood?”

Andy sighed and replied, “The conversion of energy is not so simple. For example, this dragon is now covered in wounds and is dying. However, once it regains a little bit of strength, it would immediately be able to heal itself. That is the effect of energy.”

Rody took a deep breath and stared at the large dragon in front of him. “Then... this energy thing is really great...”

Andy then laughed. “Boy, you really benefited a lot today. If you can turn this dragon into something like that gem on the lightsaber, you can become similar to that lightsaber. And...”

“And what?”

Andy sounded proud as if his scheme had succeeded. “Many years ago, Master Dandong had secretly traveled to the Northern Continent for an adventure. He was interested in dragons and had been researching them. Dragons are a top most ranked mythological animal created by God. It was not much different from the other mythological beasts except for their saintly or demonic types. After Master had completed his research, he found a way to convert the energy of the saintly or demonic beasts. For this reason, he had collected a lot of magic stones that year.

Unfortunately, all of his experiments failed. However, there was some progress for the dragons. If the method was not wrong, it should be possible to convert the dragon's energy. Master called this method the 'Dragon Transform Technique'."

“‘Dragon Transform Technique’?”

Andy's voice was very serious. "Correct! Seriously speaking, this is just one of the energy converting methods created by Master. This method only works on dragons. Many years ago, Master had secretly caught a dragon to research it. Although the Mystic Dragon is the most powerful creature, it is still a dragon. This means that the method should work. Master was also very interested in the Gods, but he never understood what was the meaning of Gods. Now that I think about it, it is possible that the Gods did not know how to kill a creature that is pure energy. As they cannot kill it, they could only seal it here. Perhaps, it is possible for Master's 'Dragon Transform Technique' to make it 'disappear'!"

Sky struggled from within the rubble. He felt like he was pinned down by something. That something was weighing down on his chest and made it difficult for him to breathe. He exerted himself and punched his way out. There was a loud exploding noise as a boulder of about 1000 catty flew out.

Sky then pushed away the rest of the rubble from his body and struggled to stand up. His body ached all over. His clothes, eyebrows, and hair were all burnt or singed. He sighed and whispered to himself, "How unlucky." After that, a white light appeared from his hands and wrapped around his body. Immediately, he appeared clothed in a new set of clothes. His eyebrows and hair also grew back rapidly. If a sorcerer were present, he would collapse from shock. That was because Sky had just used the strongest restoration magic, 'Reshape Origin'.

It was the same spell that had been used by the Black Veil Saint to heal Rody. The Black Veil Saint was terrifyingly powerful. Even

then, she was exhausted by that spell because she could barely apply it. However, Sky used it so conveniently and effortlessly.”

Sky sighed and exclaimed, “Big lizard! Are we still going to fight? Shall we have another round? I...” Sky suddenly paused as he saw a stunning scene.

That kid stood in front of the Mystic Dragon. He stretched his left hand and gently pressed on its forehead! His eyes were still closed. His expression was solemn and serious, and he seemed to be whispering something.

On the other hand, the violent Mystic Dragon was just lying there motionless. It no longer looked violent and seemed to be sobbing weakly like a gentle sheep.

What is that kid doing? Is it a pacifying spell? Is he trying to tame... wait!

Tame the dragon?

Is he crazy? This is not like training horses, cattle or lions!

This is a dragon! This is the most powerful dragons, the Mystic Dragon!

As he thought of that, an even more surprising scene unfolded. The black dragon started to shine. The light became brighter and brighter until it was difficult for one to look straight at it. Even the figure of the dragon was hidden in the light and only its outline remained.

The outline of the dragon then started to shrink... shrink... and was finally condensed into a stone, the size of a fist... Something is very wrong!

The ball of light also became smaller as it was sucked in by the boy's left hand. Sure enough, the light soon disappeared.

Sky's eyeballs almost popped out.

That Mystic Dragon, that huge Mystic Dragon, such a huge

monster just vanished right before his eyes!

The Mystic Dragon that even the Gods could not kill had just vanished!

Sky could not help but gently bite his tongue to ensure his vision was real and that it was not a dream.

Sky looked at the boy whose eyes were tightly closed and his left hand still stretched out. Sky then shouted as he rushed towards the boy.

Rody stood there and could feel a lot of energy violently flowing in through his left hand. His whole left arm felt like it was being torn apart by the violent energy. He vaguely felt like his left arm was becoming bigger and heavier. He felt that his left arm was no longer his original one, and it seemed to have become a hundred times bigger and a thousand times heavier.

When Rody opened his eyes, he saw that his left arm was still his left arm. It did not grow bigger. Rody then suddenly noticed a shadow flying towards him. As he was occupied, he stretched his hands forward to shield himself...

There was a loud noise as Sky's obese body was thrown back like a flying arrow. He was thrown back more than ten meters and crashed into a wall, creating a large pit several meters deep.

Sky then climbed out of the pit, shook his head and dusted his body. He then roared at Rody, "Boy! What did you do? Where is that dragon? Where is that large lizard?"

Rody was still looking at his left hand in a daze. Hearing the roar, he looked up at Sky and slowly replied, "I... I seem to have transformed it..."

"Transformed?" Sky stared at Rody as if a flower had just grown out of Rody's nose. He then jumped like a rabbit and shouted, "Transformed? You transformed the dragon? What do you mean 'transform'? How did you transform?"

Rody was at a loss. He raised his hand and carefully looked at it. “Just... just transformed like this...” As soon as he finished speaking, Rody staggered and fell down with a strange posture.

Sky strode hurriedly to Rody but then remembered his earlier experience. He decided to stop several meters away from Rody. He looked at Rody who was struggling on the ground and shouted, “Boy, what happened to you? You just said 'transform'. What did you mean?”

Rody struggled to stand... but all this while his left arm felt as if it was pinned down by a thousand boulders. The weight on his left arm not only made it difficult for him to stand up, he could barely lift his own arm. As a result, he was sitting on the ground with a strange posture that was leaning towards his left. He held his left arm with his right hand and, with great effort, lifted it up.

What the hell!

Rody cursed in a soft voice. He once again tried to stand up and subconsciously pushed with his left hand to support himself on the ground. He had only pushed just a little bit but heard a loud shattering noise. The ground below his body had cracked and the spot that was pressed on by Rody's left hand to support himself had sunk in.

“What the hell is going on?” Rody screamed.

“How do I know?” Sky stared at Rody, “What happened to you? What did you do? Where is that dragon? What do you mean by 'transform'?”

Rody gritted his teeth and stood up. He was sweating on his forehead out of exhaustion. He used his right hand to support his left arm so that he could stand upright.

It was a very strange feeling. His right arm felt empty and light as usual. However, his left hand that had used the ‘Dragon Transform Technique’ felt unusually heavy. It was as if his left arm was

suppressed by some powerful force.

Andy had been laughing heartily all this while. He laughed so much that he was gasping for breath. “Success! Success! Master’s method is finally successful! Master’s hypothesis is true!”

“What? Don't tell me, this method has never been tested? You made me do this without assurance?” Rody exclaimed.

“Nonsense! Of course, it had never been tested! Have you ever heard of anyone transforming a dragon? That method was just Master’s hypothesis. I did not expect it to actually work. Hahaha...” The detestable skeleton gave another strange laugh. Rody did not know whether to feel happy or angry.

Rody then saw Sky was still staring at him and he sighed. He tried to control his emotions and said, “Mister Sky, in simple words, I have transformed this dragon. In other words, this dragon is now inside my body!”

Sky: “...”

Chapter 130: Super Left Hand

While history was being made in the cavern, the battle between the snake and the lion had approached an end.

Both Wuya and Sphinx seemed to have reached their limit.

One of them was the Mystic Dragon's ninth son, a Mythical Beast. The other was one of God's loyal guardian, a high ranked Mythological Animal. At the moment, both of them were running out of energy. Wuya's face, which was originally like cold jade, was starting to turn translucent. It was to the extent that his bones and blood vessels could be seen. The horrifying figure of half man and half skeleton could barely lift his Dragon's Fang sword. He just stared at Sphinx.

Sphinx was still standing there, not moving. However, his roar no longer had any strength. The curtain of light had also turned dim and looked as though it would be broken by another attack.

Wuya was also exhausted. He was unable to cope with another attack, as he had already used up the last ounce of his energy.

"You little snake! Are you still not going to give up?" Sphinx shouted, "You are already exhausted. Do you really intend to sacrifice yourself here? The Mystic Dragon is immortal, but you are not!"

Wuya panted as he grinned hideously. He stuck his sword into the ground and spoke in a strange voice, "Sphinx. Aren't you exhausted as well? How much longer can you carry on with your energy? Today, I will chop off your head!"

After saying that, Wuya placed his hands close to his chest and sat down. He smiled and glanced at Sphinx for a moment. Then, he closed his eyes and mumbled in a language that nobody could understand.

Suddenly, his clothes split open and scattered all over. A thin

layer of scales gradually emerged on his naked body. The gray scales densely covered his body. It then spread to his neck and covered his face.

“Sphinx, do you think that I am at a dead end? Behold, the ninth son of the Mystic Dragon, Jormungandr!” After that, Wuya closed his eyes again and his face contorted in pain. He then opened his mouth and gave a long and painful cry...

“You are shedding your skin again?” Sphinx started to get nervous, “Isn't this the ninth time? You are just a snake, you are not a real dragon. If you shed your skin the ninth time, you will die! Do you really want to die?”

Wuya did not reply but continued to scream in pain. The pain became even more severe as time passed. Finally, his skin started to make a weird and creepy sound.

“Stop! Stop, you snake! You are a snake and not a dragon! A Mythical Snake cannot shed his skin nine times! Are you crazy?” Sphinx roared as he shook his head nervously.

Wuya suddenly opened his eyes and hissed. After that, the skin on his head started to peel and gradually spread to the rest of his body and revealed the soft and fair flesh underneath.

All the bones in Wuya's body seemed to have disappeared, and his body twisted in a weird way. That kind of action was not what a human skeleton could do. The crack on his head was getting bigger, and a new head gradually wiggled out from the cracked skin on top of his head.

Sphinx roared helplessly. He was just a guard. Although Wuya could not enter, he also could not leave the curtain of light. He could only watch Wuya work that dangerous magic in front of him.

Sphinx suddenly noticed the unconscious Diane at the side. The already injured Diane was caught in the battle between Wuya and

Sphinx. A shockwave from their fight had knocked her unconscious.

Sphinx immediately shouted, “Hey! That person! Kara’s people! Quick, wake up! Wake up now!”

Perhaps it was the blessings of the Gods. Diane gently frowned; her body trembled slightly and she slowly woke up. Sphinx continued to shout at her until she slowly opened her eyes. A trace of confusion could be seen in her eyes.

“The fellow from the Kara Clan! Right now, that snake is shedding off its skin for the ninth time! If he succeeds, I will no longer be able to obstruct it! Now you must help me! Understand?”

Diane started to understand and struggled to stand up. She gasped for breath and asked, “What?”

She turned around and saw Wuya’s head coming out of the cracked skin. A layer of thin and terrifying scales could be seen coming out of his face. Its inner bright and red body was making a great effort to wriggle out...

“Ahh!” Diane was terrified at this spectacle and started to scream.

“Shut up! Foolish human!” Sphinx roared loudly, “You must help me obstruct him! Go and hit him! Use your most powerful attack on him! The snake must not be disturbed while it is shedding its skin! You must stop him now!”

Diane clenched her fists so tightly that her fingernails almost cut her palms. Listening to Sphinx's words, she gritted her teeth and gradually approached Wuya, who was molting.

Wuya suddenly opened his eyes and stared at Diane. He gently opened his mouth and, with a whisper, shot out a knife. That knife was extremely fast. Before Diane could react, she was struck in the chest. Diane screamed as she fell backward.

After Wuya exhaled, his body struggled faster, and the skin was

starting to peel off faster.

Sphinx continued to roar but no matter how hard Diane struggled, she could not get up again.

After some time, Wuya finally smiled coldly. The cold smile then turned into laughter. His laughter became louder and louder until the last layers of skin were peeled off.

The more frightening thing was that the peeled off human skin reverted back into the thorny scales of a snake.

Finally, Wuya shouted loudly and slowly stood up in front of Sphinx. Wuya was naked and were covered with thick scales after his skin was completely peeled off. Even his cheeks were covered with black scales. His body emitted a violent pressure. Suddenly, Wuya pulled out the Dragon's Fang sword from the ground. The blade of the sword then immediately shot out a violent flame. That flame was much stronger than the ones he had wielded earlier.

“Sphinx! You are definitely going to die!” Wuya sounded cold. “You have forced me to shed off my skin for the last time! Although I do not have much life left after this, I am now twice as strong as I was earlier! The new me right now is enough to kill a Mythological Animal like you! Besides that, you are exhausted and do not have much power left! Let me see! How are you going to stop me now!” Wuya took a deep breath and then suddenly shouted, “Go to hell, you stone headed lion!”

Wuya moved like a meteor and suddenly appeared in front of Sphinx. His sword burned brightly as he slashed the curtain of light.

The curtain of light immediately broke without a sound and the flaming sword continued to move as if it had never been blocked. The sword then ferociously slashed at Sphinx’s head.

Sphinx only had enough time to roar before its stone body broke and came crashing down. The Sphinx had turned into a pile of

rubble!

Wuya looked up to the sky and cried. His cry was filled with a mournful laughter. The flaming sword in his hands became even more intense. With one sweep, the rubble that was once the stone-headed Sphinx had turned into dust. Wuya laughed coldly as he looked at Diane not far from him and said, "You of the Kara Clan, when I come out, I will use your blood as a gift to His Majesty! Cherish the last moments of your life! When I revive His Majesty, his flames shall scorch the earth again!"

Just as Wuya was about to walk into the stone gate, he heard a languid voice. "Who the hell is so noisy out there? Hey boy, do you know him? Did he come here with you?"

There was a loud explosion as the stone gate shattered. After that, the broken stones all flew out and a man with a large body stepped out. He was followed by a wobbly Rody.

Rody's right hand was holding his left arm. He required great effort with every step he took. His face had turned red. He was leaning to his left and was walking awkwardly.

When Wuya saw Rody, he was shocked for a moment. However, before Wuya could speak, the fatty had already started to ask, "Hey, you said something about His Majesty. Are you referring to that big lizard?"

Wuya suddenly noticed that another person had come out from the stone gate and was at a loss. The Duke of the Tulip Family coming out of the gate was expected. However, the fact that there was another person was beyond his imagination.

"What big lizard? Who are you?"

Sky did not reply and merely looked around, "Strange, where is that old lion? Where did he go? Hmmm? What are these broken stones on the ground?" Sky froze for a moment before jumping. "Oh! These stones were that old lion! How did he become a pile of

broken stones? Did you kill him? You seem very powerful..."

Wuya coldly grunted and a thought flashed through his mind. Who cares about this man? First, kill him. The revival of His Majesty is paramount!

Wuya moved like lightning. With a flash, he was already in front of the two of them. He immediately slashed them with the sword in his hand. Based on the Duke's original strength, Wuya knew that he would be able to cut him into two.

However, someone reacted faster than Wuya could attack. Despite his figure, Sky had dodged extremely quickly. In his haste, he unintentionally went behind Rody.

Rody did not react as quickly as Sky. Although he had been vigilant the moment he saw Wuya, Wuya was too fast for Rody. Just as Rody was about to dodge, Wuya's sword was already in front of him.

Rody had hurriedly lowered his body to dodge. However, he had forgotten that his left hand was extremely heavy and lost his balance. He fell backward just in time for his left hand to be in front of him.

He then heard a loud noise as a figure flew out. The figure flew a few tens of meters away and crashed into the woods. The crashing sound continued as the figure continuously crashed into more trees.

The Dragon's Fang sword had dropped and was embedded into the ground. The flames coming out from the sword had also burned the grass on the ground.

Rody felt his entire body shake but did not understand what had happened. He struggled to get up from the ground, and then he saw the Dragon's Fang sword stuck in the ground. Rody was at a loss when he looked at the scene.

Diane was also shocked. She would not have believed it had she

not seen that with her own eyes.

She saw Wuya slashed Rody's left arm. She expected Rody to die from that. Even Sphinx, the Mythological Animal, was cut into pieces from that sword. However, at that instant, a fireball had burst out from Rody's left arm. That impact was so hard that Wuya flew tens of meters into the woods. Other than the left part of his clothes that was torn, the Duke of the Tulip family stood up looking as if nothing had happened.

Rody looked at his left arm and could not help but ask, "What... What happened?"

Sky, who was standing behind Rody, laughed, "So, this is it! This is really it! That big lizard is really in your body! The aura that you just emitted belonged to that big lizard!" The fat Sky laughed as if he had just witnessed the world's most fun and interesting thing...

While Rody was still confused, Andy, who had been laughing as well finally stopped, and said, "Boy... Look... Look at your left arm. Tear away your clothes and take a look."

Rody ignored the skeleton's laughter and immediately tore away his left sleeve. The moment he looked at it, he immediately took a deep breath and whispered, "Huh? What is this?"

Chapter 131: Mystic Dragon Purge

A dragon...

It looked like that Mystic Dragon— except that its head was much, much smaller— had been sketched into his arm. Its black body and skull looked so realistic. The wings looked like they would spread out and soar any instant. Even the flame from its mouth looked so real.

The dragon was imprinted on Rody's arm. Rody gently stroked the skin with the imprint on his arm and did not find anything different from before. However, he vaguely felt some strange movements under the skin. Rody wondered if it was a psychological effect.

A roar came from the woods as Wuya rushed out. He then looked at Rody with disbelief.

“Impossible...This is impossible!” Wuya suddenly shouted, “How could I be defeated by a human? How could the great Jormungandr lose to a human!”

With an angry roar, Wuya's aura became more and more violent. His whole body seemed to emit flames. He was so angry that he became irrational... Both his eyes had turned red, and his eyeballs were no longer visible as if the eyes had become a pair of fireballs.

“Die!” Wuya roared. His body floated in the air as he created two fireballs from his hands. He then shot them at Rody.

The two fireballs flew like arrows towards Rody as they left behind trails of flame. Wuya did not stop there. He continuously created more fireballs and shot them all at Rody.

“Very interesting!” Sky was excited as he jumped in front of the fireballs. His fat body acted as a barrier for Rody and blocked all the fireballs. His body was wrapped in a white light, disintegrating the fireballs and scattering the sparks.

Wuya continued to rage and roar. Countless fireballs continued to shoot out, causing a series of non-stop explosions. Sky's figure could no longer be seen. Finally, the explosions stopped. Wuya's body shook as he had consumed too much power in that attack. His heart almost stopped when he saw the aftermath after the smoke scattered and dissipated in mid-air.

Floating in the air was a dazzling white light ball. Sky spread out his hands to suspend the ball in the air. Sparks streaked from the surface of the light ball. Sky then laughed loudly. "Interesting! You are good. You really have some abilities..."

Wuya's face had turned so red that it looked like he almost bled. He was desperate and had recklessly used his energy earlier. After all, he was not a dragon. Earlier, he had risked his life and used energy beyond his limits, placing an extreme demand on his body. He felt as if there were several forces in his body tearing him apart, and he could no longer control his energy. Wuya knew very well that he only had a large mythical snake body but he was using the dragon beast's 'Spiritual Dragon Transform'. That was a crazy move. Now, if he loses control, he would explode and die. Also, that reckless attack had pushed him into a situation far beyond his ability to handle. Now, he could feel the power in his body becoming more violent, like a wild horse that's out of control.

The fat man who was floating could not be human. That earlier attack was not something the Mythological Animals could endure. Ever since Wuya had used the 'Spiritual Dragon Transformation', he became two times more powerful. With such power, Sphinx had been demolished in his earlier attack. However, the human had effortlessly withstood all his attacks.

Wuya suddenly gave a cruel smile. His smile was ruthless and desperate. "You all! Do you think you can humiliate me, the great Jormungandr? You are just lowly humans! I will show you the consequences! I will send you all to hell!"

Wuya suddenly took a deep breath. As he inhaled, the

surrounding air moved rapidly. It was as if he was inhaling everything from the surroundings. Wuya opened his eyes and stared as his body inflated like a balloon.

Rody and Sky were stunned as they watch Wuya's body become wider and taller. Finally, Wuya grew to over ten meters in height and was about as large the giant monsters in the forest. However, his body was also covered in a mass of red lights and emitted a buzzing sound.

“Are you all ready? Humans, are you all prepared to die!” His voice roared from the sky like the giant God of ancient times.

Sky not only saw that Wuya had become large. He also faintly felt Wuya's aura becoming more and more violent. Wuya's energy continued to rise insanely. Finally, Sky had started to turn pale. He realized that Wuya's energy was becoming more unstable and uncontrolled.

As Sky was proficient in Domain Force, he understood what this meant. That guy is betting his life!

Sky had a strong domain and could be considered one of the strongest in the world. It was not a problem for him to fight with a legendary monster but it would be an entirely different matter when fighting against a legendary monster with a suicidal mindset.

At the end of the day, Sky was still a human. He did not have an immortal body like these Mythological Beasts and monsters. Besides that, the power of people with strong domain was only ‘close’ to Gods. They were not Gods.

Even a real God might have problems defending himself against the explosion of energy from this dying snake. The powerful Sphinx's death was a good example. If Wuya were to unleash his energy, it would be powerful enough to kill Sky. Sky could tell that Wuya was currently not weaker than the dragon he had been fighting for hundreds of years.

An even more frightening fact was that Wuya was rational and intelligent. On the other hand, the Mystic Dragon did not show any signs of intelligence or wisdom and merely relied on instincts. It was merely a Mythical Beast that he fought for fun.

Jormungandr, Fang of the Pit, and the ninth son of the Mystic Dragon had finally demonstrated his most powerful moment. Although he was only the ninth son of the Mystic Dragon, he was conscious and had a sense of self. After breaking out of the seal placed by the Gods, he had returned to being the terrifying monster that had fought alongside the Mystic Dragon during the war with the Gods thousands of years ago.

In comparison, the Mystic Dragon may have been Wuya's creator, but he was not revived properly by Sky. As a result, the Mystic Dragon had become a mindless Mythical Beast. It could not unleash its full power and was much weaker than the Mystic Dragon from the legends as it could only fight by its instincts. Its power was probably only one-tenth of its original strength.

Sky started to get tense. Although he was arrogant, he knew he must not be careless, especially against an opponent who was his equal.

This monster may be only just as powerful as the dragon, but he knows how to fight intelligently!

Wuya felt an intense pain course through his body. The severe pain threatened to wash away his last thread of consciousness. Wuya understood that the energy had reached the limits of what he could control.

Wuya slowly opened his mouth and spat out in a low and clear voice. “¥ # % © ¥ ×.....”

These words were as loud as thunder as they hammered on the eardrums of the people there. Sky then shouted, “What did he say? What language is that?”

Diane, who was lying down on the ground, suddenly shouted a reply, “He is speaking in the dragon’s language!”

“What?” Sky’s eyes widened and asked. “What dragon language? What did he say?”

Diane showed an agonized expression and said, “I don’t know! I don’t understand it! However, I could recognize that it is in the dragon’s language! His words... are probably a dragon’s incantation!”

“Sh*t!” Sky cursed. After living in that cave for several hundred years, he did not expect to meet such a powerful person the first day he walked out.

Diane’s expression became more agonized. Wuya’s words in the dragon language were like needles piercing her heart.

Sky took a deep breath. As he had a strong domain skill, he only felt extremely uncomfortable from Wuya’s words. However, he did not feel any kind of pain, unlike Diane. He was about to spread out his domain to challenge Wuya when he heard a painful groan behind him.

Turning around, he saw Rody suddenly shout. Rody’s face was distorted as he pulled his hair and ears.

Rody trembled as if he had gone crazy, and his face was filled with pain. Sky went to Rody’s side and tried to pull him up.

Just as he stretched out his hand, Rody suddenly showed a trace of anger and had a stern expression. He then waved his left hand to ferociously knock away Sky’s hand. Sky felt like he was hit by a powerful force and was knocked to the side. A thought flashed in his mind. Sh*t! His left hand!

Rody suddenly roared loudly. His voice was like a dozen thunders and was loud enough to drown Wuya’s words in the dragon language. When he roared, Diane felt like her head was being hammered and blacked out.

Roddy's expression was distorted. He looked confused and at a loss. Wuya's dragon language had caused the Mystic Dragon in his body to stir. As the incantation continued, the dragon energy in Rody's arm was aroused. Rody could hear thousands of voices screaming in his mind. It was as if a large hand had grabbed his soul and pulled it out. Finally, he also lost consciousness...

However, this was only what happened in Rody's mind. For everyone else, Rody now had a different appearance.

With a twisted face, Rody stood there and staggered. As if his body was out of his control, he stepped forward rigidly. His irises could no longer be seen; his eyes were now just two white spheres.

Wuya had finally finished the incantation in dragon language and suddenly roared. Two hands stretched out into the air to create two large balls of light. He then brought his hands together to combine the two balls. Wuya then opened his mouth and breathed fire into the ball of light. Suddenly, the flaming ball of light flew towards Rody.

Rody stood at his original position and did not seem to be conscious. He laughed wildly for one moment and then roared the next moment. The moment the ball of light was in front of him, Rody stretched out his left hand and blocked it.

He roared as his body was pushed back a few meters, dragging the ball of light in his hands as he went.

A short distance away, Sky had gotten back up and was floating in the air. When he was knocked back by Rody's left hand, he was thrown about ten meters away. He had crashed through the bushes and onto the ground to form a deep hole. Before he could dust off the dirt and leaves from his body, he saw a scene that surprised him.

Rody suddenly threw back that huge ball of light that was bigger than his body. The huge Wuya cried out. He deflected the ball of light with his giant hands. The flaming ball of light crashed into

the forest. A huge fiery explosion appeared at a distant point in the forest. The explosion had knocked down rows of trees.

Rody then looked up and laughed heartily. He laughed crazily and slowly stretched out his left hand as though he was pulling something with it.

Rody's laughter gradually stopped and a black aura had gathered at his left hand. The aura became denser and denser before it burst. After that, it transformed into a black flame. Black sparks started to appear as Rody showed a strange sneer. He then said something that Sky could not understand.

Sky suddenly realized. "This boy is speaking in the dragon's language!"

The following scene almost made Sky's eyeballs pop out.

The black flames in Rody's hands became larger and more powerful. Finally, with a loud blast, a black fiery dragon appeared out of the flames in Rody's hands. The black fiery dragon opened its mouth and roared as it carried the black flames with it and shot towards Wuya.

The black fiery dragon carried the black flames with it, and wherever it went, the grass and trees immediately turned to ash, without leaving any residue.

Wuya gave a terrified roar. He just had enough time to put up a huge curtain of light in front of him when the black dragon with the black flames crashed into it.

With a loud boom, Wuya's curtain of light collapsed. The black fiery dragon hit Wuya's body and passed right through it.

Wuya gave a blood-curdling scream. His body grew slightly larger before exploding with a shower of blood. His large body was totally destroyed!

Sky suddenly shouted, "Sh*t!". Out of the corner of his eye he spotted Diane that was lying down on the floor. His body then

flashed for a moment before he disappeared and then reappeared beside Diane. He covered himself and Diane in a white light before the explosion hit them both.

The earth shook fiercely. Wuya had exploded and formed a crater that was ten meters large. Within this crater, all the plants had already become ashes and could only be seen as a dark colored dust on the ground.

Rody stood in place and his face gradually became calmer. He then closed his eyes and slowly collapsed.

Sky sighed as the light covering their bodies faded. He looked at the girl and then he looked at the crater. He took a deep breath and murmured, "My god... How did this kid become so powerful?"

The girl at his feet suddenly trembled. She groaned and opened her eyes. When she saw Sky standing beside her, she screamed in fear and shrank back.

Sky spat and hatefully said, "Little girl, if it was not because I saved you, you would not even have any bones left right now!"

Diane's expression slightly changed. She looked around and trembled. "Wu... where is Wuya?"

"Are you talking about that big snake?" Sky pursed his lips and said, "Everywhere..."

"Ahh!" Diane's expression changed, and she started to scream again.

"He has already turned to ashes," Sky closed his eyes and said, with an enigmatic look.

When he saw Diane's blank expression, his enigmatic look faded. He then excitedly explained what had happened, but was shouting and dancing around at the same time.

"...Yes. That was what happened. The dragon was this big... black color ... in the end it caused this crater." Sky opened his arms

and tried to form a circle with it.

Diane's expression became heavier the more she heard, and finally, she became frightened. She trembled thinking of something terrible and after a while, she muttered in a low voice, "It's the Mystic Dragon! He has become the Mystic Dragon! He must have used... the legendary dragon's most powerful magic... 'Mystic Dragon Purge'!"

Diane's face turned pale. She suddenly clasped her hands together in front of her chest and murmured, "Great Kara. Is the reappearance of the Mystic Dragon the intention of the Heavens?"

Chapter 132: The Truth of Gods and Demons

Sky could not be bothered about why the girl was fearful. He looked at the two people near him. One of them had fainted and the other was half dead. Sky sighed and told Diane to stay put and not to go anywhere. He then re-entered the hole in the tree and went to the pond with the holy water. He summoned a ball of light to hold the holy water and then carried it out.

As soon as he came out, he saw that the girl had already crawled to the side of the unconscious Rody. However, the girl had a strange expression.

Something is wrong! She has a murderous expression...

Sure enough, the girl lifted the Dragon Fang sword that was left by Wuya and fiercely plunged it down at Rody's neck.

Sky gave a supercilious look and sighed. He then heard that girl scream, as she dropped the sword on the ground. Diane was thrown off and fell forcefully on the ground.

"Idiot," Sky spoke as he slowly walked forward. After that, he laughed and said, "I must tell you that this boy had smeared the blood of the Mystic Dragon all over his body when he was in there. Now he is extremely powerful. He is probably the strongest human in existence. Even I am not as strong as him! A normal sword would not be able to harm him. This Dragon Fang sword might be capable of harming him but you are too weak to use it. In your hands, the Dragon Fang sword is no different compared to a piece of scrap iron..."

Diane was speechless. She trembled as she looked at Sky with a face full of fear.

Sky then squinted his eyes and smiled. "Well, girl. Tell me... Why do you want to kill this boy?"

Diane's expression hardly changed. She did not dare to look at

Sky's face and replied in a soft voice, "I... I must kill him! He has now transformed into the Mystic Dragon! I cannot let him leave this valley alive! The Silvermoon Clan follows the order of the True God Kara to guard this valley. We must absolutely not let the Mystic Dragon reappear in this world!"

Sky pursed his lips and asked, "You speak of Kara. Are you one of Kara's clansmen? You all guard this valley? What a joke! Hahaha. Only you people believe in Kara's words."

Diane raised her eyebrows. She wanted to refute Sky but she was not able to.

Sky laughed and continued, "Haha, you think I am wrong? In that case, let me ask you. Why are you all guarding this valley? According to the actual myths and legends, the Mystic Dragon was sealed here by Protoss. Kara was a mortal enemy of Protoss. Why are you helping Protoss guard this place?"

Diane froze for a moment. Looking lost, she replied, "I... I don't know. However, this is the True God Kara's command, and it is absolutely not wrong. The Great Kara is never wrong."

Sky pursed his lips and thought to himself. Another stupid religious person. He then coldly said, "You said that your Kara... I mean, the Silvermoon Clan, guards this valley? In this case, can you answer my earlier questions? Others may not know the answer but I know the answer to that question."

"Know what?" Diane involuntarily asked.

Sky laughed and asked back, "Little girl, will you believe me if I tell you that your bullshit True God Kara is a liar and a despicable coward?"

Diane became angry and shouted, "Shut up! You are being blasphemous! The Great God Kara will smite you!"

Sky showed a meaningful smile as he mumbled, "Blasphemous... Haha, I have not heard this word for hundreds of years. The last

time I was called a blasphemer was by someone who worshiped Protoss. Now, even someone who worships Kara called me a blasphemer. Haha." His expression then changed and he coldly asked, "Girl, let me ask you then. Those people that worship Protoss say that Kara is the Devil. In your words, they have been 'blasphemous' to your God every day. Why hasn't Kara smitten them with lightning?"

"..." Diane was speechless.

Sky suddenly laughed, "Can't answer? Your mouth does not say it, but your heart is definitely puzzled! Hahaha! Are you starting to doubt? Your devotion to your bullshit Kara is starting to waver, right?"

Diane's expression changed drastically as she shouted, "Shut up! Shut up!"

Sky laughed for a moment and then he said, "Little girl, let me tell you the reason!" He paused for a moment and then spoke in a profound voice, "The truth is, your Kara and Protoss were associates. They were treacherous guys. However, because they were not satisfied with the division of the spoils, they became enemies."

Diane cried out again and again, "Nonsense! Nonsense!"

"Don't believe? Let me explain to you!" Sky showed a malicious smile and squatted beside Diane. He then stretched out his finger and drew two circles.

"Look... This is the Northern Roland continent, and this is the Southern Radiant continent. Girl, listen properly. I will now tell you the real history and truth of the God and Devil War thousands of years ago!"

"Listen properly... Thousands of years ago, Protoss and Kara ruled the continents together. However, they were both Gods. Protoss overlooked the Roland Continent while Kara overlooked

what you all know now as the Radiant Continent. However, for some reason, Protoss created the Mystic Dragon. Sigh... This is what you call looking for trouble... Creation is fine. After all, humans were also created by God. There was nothing wrong with creating another creature. However, the strange thing was that the Mystic Dragon created by Protoss was special. In short, the Mystic Dragon was powerful.” Sky’s expression was serious as he continued, “Extremely powerful! It was so powerful that its strength was equal to the Gods! Nobody knows the actual reason Protoss created such a powerful being. However, I suspect it is because Protoss was envious of Kara’s territory. Protoss knew that he could not defeat Kara, so he decided to create a creature to help him. After that, the most amusing farce happened...”

“The creation of the Mystic Dragon was successful and the Mystic Dragon was extremely powerful. However, it was too strong, and Protoss could not control it! Just think for yourself. Wouldn’t it be terrible if you had created something to help you, but it betrayed you instead?”

“Protoss was helpless and could not defeat the Mystic Dragon on his own. Finally, he had no choice but to ask Kara for help. Originally, Kara did not care as he and Protoss never saw eye to eye. However, the Mystic Dragon not only caused trouble at the Roland Continent but also at the Radiant Continent. Therefore, Kara decided to work together with Protoss to defeat that Mystic Dragon.”

“Protoss had gathered his own Mythological Animals. There were the God of Light, God of War, God of the Sun. Basically, there were a lot of Gods. Kara also gathered his own Mythical Beasts.

“The Mystic Dragon was not stupid. When Protoss created it, he followed the image of the dragon. As a result, the Mystic Dragon became the leader of the dragons. The Mystic Dragon then gathered the dragons and rebelled against the Gods and Kara. It fought against Protoss and Kara for a long time. Although the

Mystic Dragon was powerful, the other dragons were too weak. Those dragons may be powerful compared to humans, but they were extremely weak when compared to Protoss and Kara. Some of the dragons were unable to defeat the Mythical Beasts and Mythological Animals, and so, the Mystic Dragon searched for another method.”

Diane was already engrossed and could not help but ask, “What was the method?”

Sky laughed as his two fat cheeks shook. He then whispered, “Creation!”

Sky took a deep breath and then he continued seriously, “The Mystic Dragon was really extraordinary! Not only could he rival the power of the Gods, he also had the power to create lives! He created nine subordinates, known as the Mystic Dragon’s nine children! Initially, I did not know who that guy we saw earlier today was. However, I remembered the name Jormungandr. He should be one of the nine children of the Mystic Dragon!”

“His nine children were powerful! Each of them was as powerful as the Mythological Animals and Mythical Beasts. That resulted in both parties fighting and the battle lasted for a few hundred years. Finally, Protoss and Kara had to work together to outdo the Mystic Dragon. In the end, they killed almost all of its nine children. The Mystic Dragon survived but was also badly defeated! Legends said that Kara and the Mystic Dragon fought a duel in the sky. The battle was so ferocious that they almost pierced the sky. Kara and the Mystic Dragon both suffered severely. The Mystic Dragon was captured and Kara was badly injured... Your Kara wasn't just not a good person, he was also definitely not smart. He was obviously used as cannon fodder (dispensable) by Protoss, but he still fought recklessly with the Mystic Dragon...

“When the Mystic Dragon was caught, they also caught Jormungandr, the large snake. However, the Mystic Dragon was too strong and could not be killed. As a result, they decided to seal

it and let it sleep forever. The place it was sealed in is this place! Jormungandr was then stripped of its sense of self-awareness and became a mindless Mythical Beast. He was then also thrown into this valley and became the servant of the Gods.

“Wait...” Diane was engrossed in listening to the story and could not help but ask, “Why is it here? This is the Radiant Continent and is part of the True God Kara’s territory. Why did they seal Protoss’ Mystic Dragon in Kara’s territory?”

Sky smiled and replied, “This? Let me tell you. This was an agreement between the two parties. If Kara were to help Protoss defeat the Mystic Dragon, Protoss would be willing to give up the Roland Continent and would no longer bother about what happens in the world! That would mean that both continents would belong to Kara!”

Ignoring Diane’s expression, Sky continued to laugh, “However, Kara was too simple minded. How could Protoss give up his own territory so easily? After all, the reason he created the Mystic Dragon was to help him fight against Kara. As Kara was injured after the reckless battle against the Mystic Dragon, Protoss took this as an opportunity. Then, the rest...was almost just like what the Legend of your Kara clan stated... Protoss brought his clansmen from the North to attack the Kara clan and occupied the Radiant Continent. Unlike Protoss, Kara himself was dying, and he could not assist his clansmen. The result... in just a few decades, the continent in the south was occupied by Protoss, and your God Kara was defeated and captured by the northern Gods. I do not know the specific details, but the Protoss teachings say that the God of Sun, the God of War, and the other Gods had used their greatest powers to vanquish the Devil Kara. Finally, when Kara was gone, the Kara clan was also almost wiped out.”

Diane grieved as she heard about the history of her clan’s extinction.

Sky then waved his hands and happily laughed, "What happened

after that was really funny. Protoss was contented as long as both continents belonged to him and all the people in this world were his worshippers. However, the Protoss humans started to cause trouble. The people from both the southern and the northern continents started to cause trouble. Suddenly, Protoss' worshippers divided into two factions. Both factions claimed to be the most devout believers and accused the other of distorting Protoss' will. A minor dispute like this could easily be solved by Protoss himself. But at that point in time, the Gods were almost finished. First, he fought with the Mystic Dragon for several hundred years. Then he fought with Kara for more than a hundred years. Some of the Gods were dead, some injured and some hid themselves to nurse their wounds. Gods and humans were different. If a human were injured, he could recover within several months. If a God were injured, he would not recover for a very long time. Just like your Kara: he was injured after fighting with the Mystic Dragon and could not recover even after a hundred years. Finally, in the hundred years battle, Kara was killed by Protoss. By that time, Protoss' situation was similar to Kara's. The Gods on his side were also injured and half dead. There were some Gods who had actually died. As a result, the human world plunged into chaos..."

"As I have said earlier, the two divided factions called themselves the true believers and accused the other of being false believers. The elders from both factions were also unable to contact their Masters, causing panic among them. Since their Gods could not speak and guide them, the humans started to fight!

"The war between the two factions which started thousands of year ago lasted till this day. Both the people from the northern Roland Continent and the southern Radiant Continent believed that they worship the True God while accusing the other of being heathens.

"I grew up in the Roland Continent and later moved to the

Radiant Continent. I never liked disputes and never cared about Gods or Devils. However, I was interested in those exciting stories. I found a lot of information from the ancient secret scriptures of the northern Gods and the southern Gods. I had also investigated a lot of historical artifacts to piece together this story.

“Before I entered this mountain, uh...” Sky thought for a moment, shook his head and continued, “I cannot remember, anyway, that was a few hundred years ago. Then, I followed the legend and found this mountain, and I wanted to see how powerful the Mystic Dragon was. I did not really care about all things in this world, except strange things. The continent in the north was divided into several smaller countries but they still worshiped the same God. On the other hand, the continent in the south grew much more powerful. The Radiant Empire was then founded and expanded southwards. I believe that if the Radiant Empire was able to unite the continent, they would be able to fight the people in the North. Without waiting for the Gods to recover from their injuries, the humans started another war. Truly chaotic times.”

Sky spat as he spoke. Diane was so fascinated by the story that she had forgotten to rebuke Sky for disrespecting Kara. After that, Sky sighed and suddenly spoke again, “Now, I do not know what is going on in the outside world. Has the Radiant Continent defeated the Roland Continent? Do they have the same religion now?”

Diane opened her mouth, but before she could speak, they suddenly heard a gentle voice say, “Not yet. The Southern continent is still the Southern Continent and the Northern Continent is still the Northern Continent. The two factions are also still there and continued to fight. However, the Radiant Empire that you mentioned is almost finished.”

Both Diane and Sky jumped up in surprise. They turned to look at the person who spoke. Sky then said, “Boy, when did you wake up? I did not even notice!”

Rody showed an agonized expression as he rubbed his head and

replied, “I have been awake for a while, but my whole body feels painful. I think my bones are broken. What happened just now? Where is Wuya? Did you fight him off?”

Chapter 133: Fatty Leaves the Mountain

With the super strong fatty with them, the journey back was smoother. All the large monsters and Mythical Beasts ran away after they were beaten up by Sky. Rody did not know whether to laugh or cry when he saw the large monsters that were ten meters tall running away from someone shorter and fatter than himself.

He had some regrets not leaving Sky back in the cavern. However, Andy told him that he absolutely must take Sky along as Sky would be a great helper.

How many people in this world have a strong domain?

At first, the fatty was not willing to leave. Rody did not understand why Sky would rather sleep in that cavern and not leave. Sky did not want to leave especially after learning that the Radiant Empire was waging war everywhere. He did not want to see people kill one another.

However, Andy thought of a way and made Rody secretly tell Sky about his adventures as an impostor of the Duke of the Tulip Family...

When Rody was only half way through with what he intended to say, Sky's eyes lit up and then he whispered, "Very interesting! How could I miss watching such an interesting masquerade!"

He then had to break his vow to never leave the mountains.

Sky was someone who loved strange things. Hundreds of years ago, in order to learn more about the legendary Mystic Dragon, he gave up his comfortable life and went into that valley. He then messed around with the Mystic Dragon for a few hundred years. Even after that Mystic Dragon was gone, he intended to stay in that cavern. He had no intention of leaving because the war and the killing in the outside world upset him. However, Rody's story piqued his curiosity and prompted him to leave.

Rody did not understand why his body did not seem to have any strength. He had to rely on Diane to help him walk.

Rody did not have a single injury on his body but he felt extremely weak. Along the way, Sky used up all the energy he had conserved for several hundred of years to beat up the large monsters. However, Rody was pitifully leaning against Diane's body for support.

All along the way, Diane looked at Rody with a strange expression. Her cold eyes made Rody feel strange. Finally, Sky took Diane to a side and told her directly, "Girl! I have already told you that you can't kill him! Forget your stupid mission! Even if that is the Mystic Dragon, from my point of view, it is just an overgrown lizard! Why are you glaring at the boy? Even if he has possessed the big lizard, if he were to cause trouble in future, I will just beat the crap out of him!"

Sky glared at her angrily, and soon, her intentions had disappeared.

While all of that was happening, there was a falling out within the Flame Tribe. In the tribal meeting that day, they had all come prepared to quarrel in front of the Tribal Chief. The tribes that were arguing were simple minded. They had spent the previous night thinking of various ways to scold and curse so that they could lambaste their opponents during the tribal meetings.

However, on that day, they had found that the Tribal Chief had gone missing.

The Flame Tribe started to panic. They searched for an entire day but could not find the Tribal Chief. The guards of the village gate also swore that they did not see the Tribal Chief leave.

In addition, the guard who was guarding the Tribal Chief's room was struck unconscious by someone.

Finally, Wuyu, who was proficient in the Empire's language,

found out that the Duke of Tulip Family had also gone missing, leaving behind only his guard, Randt.

The mountain people immediately surrounded Randt. They had always been hostile to the Empire, and now they believed that it was one of the Empire's plots. They decided to just capture Randt first. Randt was also a rash person. The moment he saw the surrounding people pointing their weapons at him, he was also prepared to fight.

However, Randt thought about it carefully and knew that he would not be able to fight against so many people. Besides that, he was also worried about the Young Master's whereabouts. He then roared loudly, "Are you trying to bully me with so many people? Wasn't the mountain people supposed to be brave and strong? If you have the skills, fight me one on one!"

The mountain people did not understand Randt's words. Fortunately, Wuyu was present and also influential within the tribe. Immediately, he called everybody to get their attention and then translated Randt's words. The mountain people were stunned. They then realized that they had one hundred and eighty people on their side while their opponent was alone. That was really bullying and not the style of the mountain people.

Several well known warriors of the tribes then declared loudly that they would duel so as to not tarnish their dignity.

Randt was tall and stout. He was a head taller than most of the mountain people. A lot of those mountain people were simple minded. When they saw that Randt was towering above them, they did not dare come forward to challenge him. That was because if they were to lose, they would ruin the good name of the mountain people.

However, there were still a few mountain warriors who were huge and sturdy. They were comparable to Randt. They were ready to challenge Randt.

Immediately, the mountain people recommended a huge man to come out. That person first put down his bow. He then took off his fur jacket and revealed his muscular body. After that, he picked up a spear and readied himself in front of Randt.

Randt did not bother being polite. How could such an untrained person be able to defeat him? In front of the other mountain warriors, Randt kicked that warrior out. He smashed into a side of the wooden wall and did not get up again.

After that, a few more of the mountain warriors went up to challenge Randt, and they were also defeated. Randt could be considered a high ranked warrior in the Empire. Mere muscular men would not be able to defeat him. Besides that, Randt had also shown mercy and did not use any fighting energy.

After about seven or eight people were defeated, nobody else stepped forward to challenge him.

That was not because the mountain warriors were timid. However, the reason was the warriors that Randt had defeated were the top warriors of the tribe. If even the strongest had already lost, it would be meaningless to step up and make a fool of themselves.

The Flame Tribe felt helpless but they refused to mob Randt. Otherwise, they would lose face for bullying Randt. The people from the other tribes had originally objected to the Flame Tribe from dueling with Randt. They were scolding and laughing at the Flame Tribe, who claimed to be the strongest of the mountain tribes, for being defeated by just one person from the Empire.

Wuyu had also become angry. Only the shaman of the Flame Tribe remained calm and ordered a group attack. Even if they would later be ridiculed by the other tribes, it would be better than making a fool of themselves right then.

Randt saw the mountain warriors aimed their longbows at him. Randt knew that their arrowheads had been smeared with a special

kind of drug. Randt had witnessed it before... even a bear would immediately collapse when shot by such an arrow.

Randt was desperate and had given up hope. He knew that the final moment for him to show loyalty to the Empire and the Duke had come. It was at that moment that the situation changed.

A mountain warrior ran in from outside in a panic. He ran to the shaman and shouted something. Randt did not understand a word he said, but the warrior's expression looked as if he had just seen a ghost.

The more the shaman heard, the angrier he became. He cursed and then he brought everybody out of the village.

The moment they reached the entrance of the village, they heard a loud crash as the thick gate of the village toppled down. Amidst the flying dust, they saw a large monster that was several meters tall.

The mountain warriors doubted their eyes but eventually realized that they were looking at an actual giant. The giant held a huge hammer in its hands, and his roar was as loud as thunder. It then raised the hammer and smashed the wall in front of him. Half of the wall was totally smashed.

The mountain people may be courageous, but after all, they were just normal people. When they saw the legendary monster of the mountains, they immediately retreated.

After that, they looked carefully and saw some people sitting on the shoulder of the giant.

Sky was riding on the shoulder of the monster as he laughed wildly. After that, he shouted, "Interesting! Why have I not thought of something so amusing before?" Sky proudly looked at Diane and Rody beside him. He then looked at the scared mountain people and commanded the large monster to walk forward.

The monster did not understand Sky's language. He was just

caught and forced to carry the three of them through the forest. The method Sky used to command the monster was simple. Whenever Sky had the slightest dissatisfaction with the monster, he would kick it.

After getting kicked, the monster would scream and act obediently. Along the way here, Rody saw that the large monster was used like a horse and sighed. He really did not know whether bringing such an unruly person to the world was a good idea or not.

Initially, they had wanted to use the secret entrance to return to the village. However, Sky lost his temper. He said that he had been exploring tunnels for hundreds of years. Since he had come out of the cavern, he refused to move through tunnels like a rat anymore. As a result, Sky caught a monster and left for the canyon, which was full of spiders. All along the way, Sky threw fireballs at the spiders. The spiders were burned and they fled. After leaving the canyon, he headed toward the Flame Tribe.

From a distance, Sky saw Randt standing on a wooden platform in front of a wooden house and asked Rody, “Boy, is he your companion?”

Sky noticed Rody nodding and then he kicked the large monster. The monster felt the pain and hurried towards Randt.

Most of the mountain people fled. However, there were a few courageous people who picked up their bows and shot arrows at the large monster. The monster was Sky's 'toy’ and therefore, he would definitely not allow those arrows to hurt it. Before the arrows could reach the monster, they were blocked by balls of light emitted by Sky.

Seeing these, the mountain people screamed, believing that the monster was the evil of the mountains.

Randt was standing on a wooden platform which was on a higher terrain than the mountain people on the ground. He could see a

person on the shoulder of the large monster waving at him. Recognizing the person as His Excellency the Duke, he immediately jumped down from the wooden platform and ran towards the monster.

Sky fiercely kicked the head of the monster. The monster growled and then knelt down before fainting. Sky, Rody, and Diane then jumped down from the shoulder of the monster.

The surrounding mountain people finally saw that the person who jumped down from the shoulder of the monster was the Empire's messenger. They became frightened and confused.

Finally, Wuyu regained his composure and shouted loudly, "Duke of the Empire! What are you doing?"

Rody looked somewhat apologetic and said, "Sorry, we wanted to enter the village but the guards could not understand us. So, we had to force our way in."

The other mountain people saw the monster kneeling on the ground and one of their own people talking to the other party. They then slowly and carefully approached as they held their weapons tightly.

The mountain people were very noisy. In the midst of the noise, that wiser shaman walked up to Wuyu and whispered something. After that, Wuyu immediately asked, "Duke! Where is our Tribal Chief?"

Rody's face had an awkward expression and he did not know how to reply. He could not just tell them: 'Your Tribal Chief was transformed from a monster and I have killed him.'

These mountain people had regarded Wuya as their God. If he had really told them that, they would end up fighting desperately.

However, before Rody could speak, Sky stood out and answered, "Your Tribal Chief had entered that canyon and was killed by this monster... uh, he was eaten! We have captured this monster to

take revenge for your Tribal Chief!”

Sky had spoken quickly and impatiently. As a result, Wuyu took some time to process and understand those words. When he finally understood Sky’s words, he jumped and shouted, “Nonsense! Nonsense! How could the Tribal Chief die?”

Wuyu then relayed Sky's answer to the shaman in their language. The shaman was also shocked. The surrounding mountain people started to shout again. Sky impatiently pulled Rody and whispered, “Why waste time explaining to these people? They would always interpret it wrongly. Let’s just take your companion and leave!”

Rody sighed and summoned Randt to come to him.

At that time, the mountain people shouted in unison. They then aimed their bows and arrows at Rody and the others, who were standing in the middle.

Wuyu shouted again, “Duke! Speak! What happened?”

Rody thought for a moment and then he replied, “Wuyu, I did not tell any lies. Your Tribal Chief is really dead. He died in the canyon.” Before he could finish explaining, Sky pulled Rody’s clothes and started walking away. “Faster! There is no point talking to them. Their Tribal Chief would not return no matter what you say.”

Those mountain people tried to stop them. However, before the nearby warriors could shoot their arrows, they were taken and thrown away by Sky. The archers who were further away quickly shot their arrows. However, with Sky around, they were covered with a layer of protective light. Ordinary arrows would not be able to hurt them. They eventually fought their way out. The mountain people not only failed to stop them, they also failed to catch up with them.

They left behind the large monster kneeling there. It did not

matter whether the mountain people believed Sky or not. How they dealt with the large monster was none of his business.

Chapter 134: Imperial Capital's 'Good News'

They traveled through the mountains for a few days. Although Rody did not know the way, with Diane, who was from the Silvermoon Clan, being there, they would not get lost. However, their progress was so slow that Sky could not help but complain, "If I did not have to stay with you all, I would have already flown out of this place!"

They soon left the mountains and followed the main road towards the Purple Leaf City. First, they arrived at the Southeast barracks of the Southern Legion. With Rody, the Duke, around, naturally everything went smoothly at the barracks. They rested there for a while and then rode to the Purple Leaf City on horses.

The soldiers had reported Rody's return to the city ahead of time.

The Governor-General immediately came out to meet the Duke. However, Camus had left to visit the other barracks and was not in the Purple Leaf City.

Diane had previously planned to leave the mountains alone and contact the Duke of the Tulip Family to deal with Wuya. However, in a turn of events, her tribe's biggest enemy, Wuya, was killed by the Duke of the Tulip Family. Besides Wuya's death, the fact that the Mystic Dragon was also now attached to the Duke's body was a more important matter. She must quickly return and report that to the Elders of her clan.

Rody finally saw the high walls of the Purple Leaf City in the distance, and the governors and local officials waiting to greet him at the gates. Rody sighed. His trip to the mountains was truly bizarre. The plans he had prepared in advance was not even used, and he even ended up killing the biggest threat of the Empire in the south. He also inexplicably discovered an extremely strong person as well as gained 'a dragon' in his left arm.

Rody had been feeling bitter about his left arm for the past few

days. He was not sure what happened, but that day he had somehow killed Wuya in a crazed state. When he regained consciousness, he could barely believe it when Sky narrated the story to him.

Rody could not believe that he had the ability to kill Wuya. Judging from Wuya's power, he believed that even a hundred Rody would lose to him. However, after listening to Sky, he was compelled to believe what happened. Besides that, his left arm had also been feeling strange.

That damn Andy...

Rody sighed and felt uneasy. He could not contact Andy ever since he inexplicably killed Wuya. His connection with Andy was cut off like a snapped thread.

In fact, Rody could only give a wry smile when Sky told him of the incredible attack that he had made on Wuya and the results of it—the attack that Diane called the 'Mystic Dragon Purge'.

His left arm still felt extremely heavy as if it did not belong to him. He could not move it unless he put a lot of effort into lifting it.

Out of curiosity, Sky lifted Rody's left arm to assess the weight. He felt that it was not exceptionally heavy. There was not much difference from the arms of other people. It looked like only Rody could feel the effect of his hand being 'crushed by boulders'.

What made Rody helpless was that the "Mystic Dragon Purge" that he applied when he was unconsciousness had a strong side effect.

Ever since he regained consciousness, he felt extremely weak. After so many days, he had still not recovered. Not only could he not recover the strength he used to have, he actually needed someone to support him when he walked.

He had been a young and robust man, but now he was like an

extremely sick person. The thing that made Rody feel even more helpless was that his body did not seem to have any problem. His body was still as strong and healthy as before, but somehow, Rody had no energy. He was not only unable to apply his fighting energy, he could not even lift the Dragon Fang sword.

After converting the strongest dragon in existence, he was expecting some kind of positive results. However, he ended up half dead. At that moment, Rody would not be able to defeat even a single common soldier...

In that regard, Sky was also clueless. After all, Sky had never heard of anyone who could totally absorb a dragon, especially the legendary Mystic Dragon. He was completely clueless even though he was a person that had already obtained a strong domain. When Sky examined Rody's body, he did not find anything wrong with his body, nor did he find any internal injury. In fact, Rody's fighting energy was so great that it had almost started to condense.

However, despite Sky obviously feeling a powerful fighting energy inside Rody's body, Rody was unable to apply that energy.

Sky shook his head and forced a smile. "Nobody could understand this thing. I am still wondering how you absorbed the dragon into your body. Even if you say that it was just energy, how could your body bear the power of such a huge dragon? Even if the Mystic Dragon was much weaker then than before and was just about Wuya's level, how could an ordinary human like you absorb that much energy?"

Rody touched his left arm and looked at the black dragon pattern on it. Rody did not know whether he should feel fearful or just at a loss.

Walking into the city with these feelings in his heart, Rody did not listen to a single word the Governor-General was saying. The local officials were also there busily complimenting him, but Rody took it as if they were wasting their time.

Xier's Governor-General wondered to himself why the Duke seemed to have grown larger after his trip to the mountains. Besides that, he also wondered who was that fat man by the Duke's side. Is he the Duke's guard?

Isn't this guard too arrogant? I, the Governor-General of the Empire came out to meet you all. His Excellency the Duke, put up an air and did not get down of his horse. That is fine. However, how could a small guard like him dare act high and mighty too!

The soldiers led them all the way to the Governor-General's mansion. Just as they entered the main entrance of the mansion, Sky sniffed and cheered, "Wine! Wine! This is the smell of wine!" Sky then rushed ahead without waiting for Rody to speak.

Tasty looking food and wine were placed in the main hall. In the middle of the hall was the golden wine barrel. Everything was just like the first time when Rody came to the Purple Leaf City, but this time, Camus was not around. They did not need to worry about anyone disturbing, like what happened the previous time. However, Rody was not in the mood for it. He looked at the Xier's Governor-General coldly and said, "I am tired. I don't need all these." He then pointed at Sky and said, "Arrange a room next to mine for this gentleman. After that, clean up this place."

The Governor-General felt awkward and turned stiff on the spot. However, Rody was not in the mood and did not care. Sky then casually pulled aside an attendant. He then pointed at the wine barrel and told the attendant, "Carry that wine barrel into my room."

Rody silently went back to his room and shut himself in.

He repeatedly called for Andy. Andy was the one who taught him how to convert the dragon and got him into that mess. It looked like only Andy could help him to recover.

Feeling upset, Rody could not help but smash the wall with his arms. That created a loud banging sound, and a large hole was

formed in the wall. Fortunately, the wall was made of the boulders from the South, and that punch did not break through the wall.

Rody then felt a light feeling of pain in his hands and gave a wry smile. My left hand is now more powerful. However, I cannot use this power. Each time I lift my left hand, I have to use half a day's worth of energy. I feel like a child holding a large hammer. The hammer may be powerful but the child is unable to lift that hammer.

Feeling unhappy, Rody could not help but punch the wall again and created another depression.

Rody had only punched twice but he was already panting. He sat on the bed and gasped for breath. He had already run out of energy. Suddenly, he heard Sky shouted from the next room. "Boy! Have you gone mad? I was drinking wine, but your two punches caused the dust from the ceiling to fall into the wine!"

The following day, Camus returned to the Purple Leaf City. The first thing that Southern Army Regiment Commander did was meet Rody. When they met, Camus was surprised to see Rody looking lifeless and depressed.

"Did the plan to enter the mountain not go well?"

Although Camus had a spy working as a blacksmith in the Flame Tribe, there was a turmoil at the tribe for the past few days. After Wuya's death, the tribe was on alert. The gates were closed the entire time and nobody was allowed to leave. As a result, the blacksmith also could not send out any news."

"Your Excellency the Duke, did things go well on the mountains?"

Rody raised his head to glance at Camus and saw him looking haggard. He also seemed to have more white hair. Presumably, Camus had overworked himself these past few days by running around to appease the soldiers and assign them tasks.

Rody sighed and replied, “To be honest, we were not able to successfully implement the plan.”

Camus’ expression immediately sank and he also sighed. “Is that so? Is Wuya truly so formidable? Is the information of him attacked by assassin false? Or is it that he has already finished off those that opposed him? Were you not able to find any tribes that can be drawn to our side?”

Rody shook his head, and Camus found his facial expression strange... “General Camus, truthfully speaking, although we were not able to implement our plan on this trip to the mountain, the final result still greatly benefits the Empire!”

“Oh?” Camus’ eyes lit up.

Rody nodded and then he continued, “Wuya is dead!”

“What!” Even the experienced Camus jumped when he heard that.

“Wuya is dead?” Camus stared at Rody, “How did he die?”

“How did he die...” Rody laughed bitterly. “This is rather complicated. I don’t know the details, but the main point is that he was killed.” As he continued to speak, his voice grew weaker as if he did not have any lung power.

Camus was convinced when he heard that Wuya was dead. He was excited and did not notice that there was something suspicious about Rody’s expression.

Camus was pleasantly surprised. He walked up and down the room as he loudly said, “This is a good opportunity! With Wuya’s death, the Flame Tribe would be in turmoil. In this case, the mountain alliance is finished! The mountain people were born obstinate. Without a strong leader like Wuya, they would not be able to unify. As long as the mountain people are in a mess, there would be no threats to the South of the Empire! However...” He looked surprised and asked, “Your Excellency the Duke, is Wuya

really dead? Can you confirm this? How exactly did he die?"

I used the legendary Mystic Dragon's 'Mystic Dragon Purge' and turned him to dust! Rody's heart spoke, but his mouth replied vaguely, "This seems to be connected with someone from the Silvermoon Clan. Most likely, they did it."

Camus nodded and pondered for a moment, "If it was the Silvermoon Clan, it would not be surprising. This year, Wuya had destroyed an entire village of the Silvermoon Clan and had made enemy with them. The Silvermoon Clan is the largest tribe in the mountains. They probably have some powerful masters. However, it is a pity. We should contact and negotiate with them. I heard that they were a strange tribe who is not interested in the world outside the mountains. It would be favorable for the Empire if we were to have their help!"

"Contact..." Rody laughed bitterly in his heart. In the beginning, I had contacted them. However, later, my body absorbed the Mystic Dragon, and now that girl from the Silvermoon Clan thinks of me as the worst monster ever. If it were not because of Sky, I would most likely be dead right now. I don't think it is possible to contact and negotiate with them anymore. They would certainly kill me on the spot when Sky is no longer around.

Camus looked at Rody's strange expression and asked, "What's wrong?" Pausing for a moment, he spoke again in a softer voice, "Seth, what's wrong with you? You don't look too good."

Rody sighed and replied, "General Camus, I am fine. I sustained some injuries on the mountains and have not recovered yet."

Rody spoke as if he was half dead. When Camus saw that, he secretly disapproved. He felt that the young Duke of the Tulip Family was too weak. A real man should not be so weak even if he was seriously injured.

Moreover, the Duke looked extremely healthy and walked normally. He certainly did not look like he was seriously injured.

Camus frowned and was about to lecture Rody when they suddenly heard the rapid sound of footsteps. Randt strode into the room. He held an envelope in his hands and loudly said, “Your Excellency the Duke. Letter! There is a letter from the Imperial Capital!”

“Hmm?” Rody froze for a moment and then he asked, “What letter? Who is it from?”

Randt looked at the letter and replied, “Your Excellency the Duke. The sender's name is not on the envelope. I do not know who sent this letter. A messenger from the Purple Leaf City gave it to me and said that it was from the Imperial Capital and is from Your Excellency’s home.”

“From home?” Rody shook his head. Nicole would not write him a letter as their discussions were secret and would be impossible to put on paper. If the contents of the letter were exposed, everything would be over. Shaking his head, he casually asked, “What is written?”

Randt froze for a moment as he glanced at the letter. Rody reacted and saw a name faintly written on the folded part of the letter. The name written was 'Myka'.

Rody then thought. Why would Myka write me a letter?

He became tense and remembered that Myka knew his true identity. He also did not know the content of the letter. My God, she would not mention anything about my secret, right? It is too dangerous. It would be terrible if the letter was lost or fell into someone else’s hands!

Rody quickly opened the letter and saw a line of elegant words. However, the handwriting seemed hasty and sloppy.

The written words were: “There are changes at home. Please pay attention to the news of the Imperial Capital!”

Rody immediately stood up. He stared at the text with an uneasy

feeling.

There are changes at home? What does it mean? What does it mean by 'changes'? Did something happen to Nicole?

Rody felt worried and depressed. Perhaps, he could choose not to care about many other things, like risking his life in the mountains or fighting in the battlefields. However, Nicole's safety was definitely something of great concern to him.

That news made Rody very restless.

Camus noticed that Rody showed a strange expression after reading the letter and wanted to ask. However, considering that it was a letter from home, he did not open his mouth.

After sending off Camus, Rody felt uneasy for the rest of the day. He was thousands of miles away from the Imperial Capital, so how would he know about the news in the Imperial Capital? He told his bodyguards to go to the Governor-General's office and investigate if there had been any news of the Imperial Capital. However, nothing major seemed to have happened.

Rody endured the first day but on the second day, he lost his cool. He believed that Myka would not lie to him. If Myka said that something had happened, then something must have definitely happened.

Early the next day, Rody gritted his teeth in determination and summoned Randt. He softly said, "Prepare yourself. We will immediately return to the Imperial Capital!"

Randt was shocked. His expression immediately changed and cried out, "Your Excellency the Duke! This will not do! You are now the Special Envoy of the South by the order of His Majesty! Without His Majesty's order, you cannot freely choose to return to the Imperial Capital!"

Rody shook his head without speaking. He actually understood what Randt meant.

The Emperor dispatching him here was just for penal servitude. Giving Rody a title was just to make sure he stayed here. If he were to wait for His Majesty's order, he would end up waiting forever and never be able to return to the Imperial Capital.

Randt was a rough person but he understood that nobody could defy the Emperor. Even the greatest family of the Empire, the Tulip Family, could not defy the Emperor.

If those who were posted elsewhere were to return to the Imperial Capital without His Majesty's orders, they would be beheaded.

Randt bitterly advised Rody, but Rody would not listen. To Rody, Nicole's safety was the top priority. Out of the blue, Sky walked in from outside. When he heard about returning to the Imperial Capital, he laughed. "Good! Good! Good to return! I want to see what the Tulip Family is like! What? The Emperor would punish you? If he dared to punish you, I will burn down his palace!" Sky spoke without fear.

Just when the three of them were making a fuss, there was an uproar and footsteps coming from outside. Immediately, the Xier Governor-General and a few other people entered.

The Xier Governor General tried to ingratiate himself and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, you look..." Before the Xier's Governor-General could finish, a powerful voice interrupted. "Your Excellency the Duke, I have arrived!"

Rody looked outside and saw a majestic figure walk in. He wore a military uniform and carried a sword on his waist. He looked worn out from traveling but nevertheless still full of vigor. That man, was the Commander of the Wolf Fang, Sieg.

Rody was shocked as Sieg walked up to him and hugged his shoulders. He laughed and said, "Your Excellency the Duke! I marched all the way here and have finally found you! That damn Military Minister had been giving us so much trouble to delay us

from coming to the South! However, I know that Your Excellency the Duke came to the south to prepare for war against the mountain people! If there is going to be a war, how can Your Excellency fight without us, the Wolves Fang!”

Rody showed a surprised expression and said, “Commander Sieg, you...”

Sieg waved his large hand and laughed, “Your Excellency the Duke, don't worry! Even if the Military Minister tried to give us trouble, he could not do much! The military force is inclined towards us. Now the command has been transferred! The Wolf Fang have also transferred out of the Central Cavalry and now serve under Your Excellency! I learned that Your Excellency is preparing to fight in the South so I quickly marched here! I have already dispatched and stationed the twenty thousand Wolf Fang soldiers in the city!”

Rody was pleasantly surprised and laughed, “Good, but you are too late! There probably will not be a war... Right!” He glanced at Randt who was still tugging at his clothes. He then remembered his intentions to return to the Imperial Capital and asked, “Commander Sieg, when you left the Imperial Capital, did anything happen?”

Sieg froze for a moment and then he smiled. “That... I was about to say it! Your Excellency the Duke, there was a stir in the Imperial Capital the past few days! Something major had happened!”

“What is it?”

Sieg gave a weird smile and continued, “This is information that came from the Imperial Palace. Apparently, His Majesty is going to marry a new concubine... that is...” At this point, Rody shook his head. That was not what he was asking. He did not care if Abbas XI wanted to marry a new concubine. He did not care even if Abbas XI wanted to marry Jojo. After all, he did not have the slightest affection for Jojo. It would be great if she became the Emperor’s

concubine. Then, she would no longer disturb him.

Sieg did not stop smiling as he slowly continued, "...that is... the Tulip Family's Miss Nicole!"

There was a moment of silence.

"What!" Rody suddenly shouted violently. He jumped as if he was a cat that had its tail stepped on, and he almost hit the ceiling.

Chapter 135: Tagging Along

When Sieg saw the Duke going hopping mad, he was very frightened. The Duke's expression was distorted, and the fury could be seen in his eyes. Rody stared at Sieg as if he was his arch enemy. The murderous look put a cold chill in his heart.

“Your Excellency the Duke... You...”

“What about me!” Rody roared. “What happened? That bastard Emperor dared to grab my... my sister!” He had almost blurted out ‘my woman’, but fortunately, he changed his words. However, his anger did not diminish.

Those words made everyone in the room jump in surprise. Saying ‘bastard Emperor’ was outrageous. Even those who thought the Emperor was not a good person would just say those words in their minds and not out loud. Besides that, the Governor-General was just standing at the side, and he was an outsider.

Sieg subconsciously looked at the Governor-General. However, before he could see the Governor-General's expression, Rody's eyes had turned red. Rody grabbed Sieg by his collar and he shouted, “Speak clearly! Tell me everything you know!”

Sieg started to panic. He was a soldier who would kill on the battlefield without even blinking. At the moment, however, he was filled with a sense of dread. Sieg realized that the Duke was extremely furious. If he did not answer the Duke properly, the Duke might kill him in his fury.

The people around him were also frightened. That Xier Governor-General then smiled and said, “Your Excellency the Duke, this... If your sister marries the Emperor, then it is glory to your family... you...”

Before the Governor-General could finish, Rody went up to him and kicked him out of the room. He then turned to Sieg and

shouted, “Stop daydreaming! Speak!”

Sieg's paralyzed mind was shocked into action when he saw the powerful Governor-General being kicked out by the Duke. He quickly thought of what to say and replied, “Your Excellency the Duke, this is the biggest news in the Imperial Capital now. The news came from the Imperial Palace and it must be true. I traveled day and night, without stopping, so that I can quickly report this to you...” Sieg stopped as he looked at Rody's oppressive expression. He had stopped speaking just in time, before the words ‘good news’.

After taking a deep breath, Sieg continued, “At the beginning of this month, His Majesty said he was going to marry another concubine. Everybody had thought that His Majesty wanted to marry Miss Jojo...” Sieg stopped for a moment and secretly looked at Rody's expression. Seeing that the Duke did not have any notable expression, he felt reassured and continued, “Many people in the Imperial Capital knew that His Majesty adored Miss Jojo. However, a few elders of the Imperial lineage objected. These elders opposed to His Majesty marrying Miss Jojo. Their reasoning was that Miss Jojo's usual attitude and conduct was not pleasing to their eyes. They felt that she is not dignified enough to be someone of the Imperial lineage.”

“What is the relationship between that and Nicole? How did it suddenly involve Nicole?” Rody glared with wide eyes.

“That...” Sieg showed a strange expression and then he continued, “Your Excellency the Duke, this is really not a correct question. His Majesty would definitely need to marry a new concubine. His Majesty is no longer young, but Her Highness the Empress has not given him a prince. The position of Crown Prince in the Empire is still empty. That is why His Majesty needs to marry a concubine. At first, His Majesty wanted to marry Miss Jojo. Miss Jojo's family status is also worthy of the Royal Family. However, the elders of the of the Imperial lineage disliked Miss

Jojo because of her conduct. Besides that, His Majesty's mother was anxious. She scolded His Majesty that they already have a 'hen that does not lay eggs and does not want another hen from the same family', in a figurative reference to the futility of the king marrying someone from the infertile queen's family. These words are not my words. Many secretly feel that Miss Nicole is the best candidate for the concubine position. Miss Nicole is young, beautiful and smart. She is also the eldest daughter of the Empire's greatest family. The Tulip Family has always been the pillars supporting the Empire and loyal. From all aspects, Miss Nicole is definitely the best candidate. The truth is, if Miss Nicole were to be born about ten years earlier, Miss Nicole would have been the Empress."

Rody gritted his teeth and his expression became more horrifying. "What did you say?"

Sieg was at a loss, "Your Excellency the Duke. Why are you so angry? This... This is a good thing. Isn't it good that someone from the Tulip Family becomes His Majesty's concubine?"

Rody's glare made Sieg so frightened that he cringed and wished he could swallow his words. Rody looked furious. His face was flushed as he gnashed his teeth and asked, "Where is Nicole now? How is she right now?"

"I don't know. Before coming here, I went to say farewell to Miss Nicole but I did not get to see her. Miss Nicole is now behind closed doors and does not step outside. She also did not want to meet any visitors... The past few days, there were also a lot of people in the Imperial Capital who visited her. When they heard that Miss Nicole of the Tulip Family is selected to be His Majesty's concubine, they went to congratulate her."

Rody shook and let go of Sieg. He then gritted his teeth and walked up and down the room.

Both Sieg and Randt showed a strange expression. They could not

understand the Duke's reaction. The Emperor only wanted to marry his sister and not his wife nor his mother. Why did the Duke have an irreconcilable face?

Sky was having fun listening to them from the side. He waited patiently for them to finish talking and then he turned to Rody and laughed, "Boy, so what now? It seems that the Emperor is also an interesting guy. Now that he wants to marry your sister, so I would feel embarrassed to burn down his palace... Hahaha."

His words 'marry your sister' was like pouring oil onto the fire. It made Rody even angrier, and Rody glared at Sky. Sky already knew that Rody was an imposter. As a result, his words were meant to deliberately provoke Rody.

After a moment of silence, Rody suppressed the anger in his heart and spoke, "Get ready. I am going back to the Imperial Capital."

Sieg and Randt were stupefied and then both of them tried advising Rody against it. It would be a crime if a dispatched general of an army returned to the Imperial Capital without the order of His Majesty. Sieg hurriedly asked, "Your Excellency the Duke, why are you so anxious to go back? His Majesty will summon you when it is time for the wedding... ah!" Before he could finish, Rody had already pulled out Sieg's sword and slashed at an empty space. He then said resolutely, "I have decided to go back! If you are unwilling, just stay put here! I will go alone!" Rody then threw the sword on the ground and strode to the back.

Sky laughed and followed behind Rody while Sieg and Randt looked at each other speechlessly.

At that time, the Xier's Governor-General furiously ran in from outside. After being kicked out by Rody earlier, the fat man felt dizzy and painful. He took a long time to stand back up. He was afraid to go back in when Rody was still fuming in the room. Now that Rody had gone out, he rushed back in and cursed, "Duke of the Tulip Family, I am the Governor-General appointed by His

Majesty! How dare you hit me? I will definitely report you! I..."

However, when Governor-General saw Sieg's cold eyes he subconsciously stopped his barrage. Sieg coldly said, "Governor-General, if you want to go against our Excellency the Duke's wishes, it is best that you first measure your own capabilities. Our Duke had casually killed two garrison commanders in the northwest and one of them was a noble. After that, he killed even more imperial officials to quell the rebellion in Westwood. Is your neck harder than the necks of these people or even the warriors of the Great Moon Kingdom? Very good. You may wish to test it... His Excellency the Duke seems to have a lot of anger to vent today."

Ignoring the cold sweat on the Governor-General's head, Sieg and Randt immediately chased behind Rody.

Old man Allier could be considered the most well-known person in the vicinity of about several dozen miles. That was not just because he had opened the only inn in this vicinity. That fact, however, was truly fortuitous. Here was the artery of transportation of the Empire. Merchants from the north and south gathered here. As there was only one inn here, his business was extremely good.

The real reason Allier was well known was his temper. Even though the man was old, he was as irritable as a violent horse. At that age, he would still roll up his sleeves and grab a scimitar to risk his life.

Who would dare be his business competitor? Any competitor would certainly fail. Everybody knew that Allier was in the Cavalry of the Northwest Legion during his younger days. He was said to have killed numerous people on the battlefield. The rusty scimitar he carried all day was looted from one of the grassland barbarians. Competing with him the harsh way was also not possible because his son was a small captain in the town's garrison, and competitors would be afraid that he would bring his soldiers to visit their inns.

Thus, Allier could securely run his business as nobody would dare to compete with him. However, although Allier was powerful, he was honest and proper. People from the north and south seemed to like staying at his inn. They would drink wine together, and when Allier was drunk, he would talk about his glorious days in the Northwest. Now that the Empire was declining, people liked to immerse themselves in the glory of the past. Those who came from other places also liked to listen to Allier talk about the past. Although he looked scary, he was a kind person as long as he was not provoked.

That night, Allier was sitting in the courtyard drinking. He was sober and he was looking around. Recently, his business was not as good. Although his story had been told so many times that it had become boring, the guests still listened to him with pleasure. He knew that he was getting old and was forgetting a lot of details. There were not many guests that night. A few of the guests waited for him to tell his story, but he could not get into the mood. He was worried about a particular matter.

His son was doing quite well at the garrison, and recently, he had heard that his son was going to be promoted. However, the Garrison Commander was very greedy. Although he did not say it, the commander's intention was clear. Allier may have opened an inn, but he was not very rich. However, the damn Garrison Commander actually hinted to Allier's son that he expected to be bribed with more than a hundred gold coins. How could a Garrison Commander be so greedy? That plainly was daylight robbery!

During those years when the late Duke was the commander of the Northwest Legion, nobody would dare act this way. People who took bribes would be beheaded.

As he pondered, Allier gave a wry smile. The Empire was getting weaker. He had heard that there was a big battle in the Northwest, and the Northwest Legion had lost more than half its soldiers. If the Young Duke had not brought the Lightning God's Whip to save

them, the Northwest would have been lost.

May the Almighty protect the Young Duke. The Tulip Family is the last pillar of the Empire!

As Allier let his imagination run wild, the sound of horses running could be heard. The sounds then stopped in front of his inn. Based on the sounds, Allier knew that the riders were highly skilled. This was because the horses had been galloping but, when they stopped in front of the inn, there was no shouting or neighing. This was a testimonial to their riding skills.

Allier walked out of the inn with a few of his servants and saw that a dozen robust men had already dismounted. They then handed over the horses to the servants of the inn and followed a young man in.

Allier looked at them and thought that it was strange.

From the way they walk, these people are soldiers! The old man would definitely not be wrong. The way an ordinary person walked and the way a soldier walked were different. Although they were in civilian clothing, they walked steadily with their heads held high like well-trained soldiers. At the very least, the murderous feeling emitted by their bodies were definitely real. Even the soldiers at the garrison did not have this kind of imposing aura.

Allier was not only sure that they were soldiers but he was also sure that they had been to the battlefields and had seen a lot of killing.

There were more than a dozen of them. They seemed exhausted as if they had traveled a long distance. However, they still looked resolute.

These people are definitely soldiers! But where did they come from to have such quality? The old man felt uncertain.

Such spirit is comparable to the elite bodyguard of the Duke

during my time in the Northwest Legion! Are there still such elite soldiers in the Empire, today?

Allier laughed as he thought of the time he went to the Imperial Capital. He remembered seeing a few people from the Central Cavalry in the Imperial Capital. The soldiers known as the Empire's 'strongest elites' were so weak that he believed he could defeat a few of them alone if he were younger.

Although he felt uncertain, he still enthusiastically greeted them. As he used to be in the army, he felt a certain fellowship with these people. He hid his irritable temper and made himself busy.

However, the guests were strange. No matter where they went, they seemed to guard the young person in the middle.

That young man was quite pleasing to the eye. He looked strong like a good officer. However, he did not have much vitality and looked gloomy. He had golden hair and looked like a noble. The nobles still have such a person? Don't they usually have a fat and despicable appearance?

He was then aware that a few of the young maids were looking at the young officer. He could not help but cough twice. After that, he heard an ear-piercing laughter, "Boy, look! Those girls are looking at you. Haha..."

Allier frowned. That fat person fitted the description of fat and despicable nobles.

This dozen or more men ate in the halls, and it seemed like they would be staying for the night.

As Allier watched them eat, he frowned. The young officer seemed to be a powerful person. The young officer and the fatty ate together while more than ten of the other people stood watching them and did not even dare to sit. Hmph. This officer does not seem to appreciate his subordinates. He does not seem like a good person. What a pity.

However, Allier once again noticed something strange. The dozen of people standing guard did not seem dissatisfied. Even when they looked at the young officer, their eyes were filled with respect.

The young man seemed to have thought of something. He took three quick bites of the inn's best roast lamb, and then put down his fork and knife. He then waved and asked to be escorted to his room. His subordinates seemed to be very careful and did not speak. They were afraid of provoking the young man. Sigh. Such a young noble. He gets everything he wants. What more does he want? His life is already much better compared to a normal civilian.

The tallest brawny guard accompanied the young man and the fatty upstairs to their rooms. The remaining people finally sat down to eat. They suddenly became more relaxed as they talked and laughed.

However, they were very careful. They only talked about casual stuff like how they were hurrying on their journey and that the meat tasted good. Although Allier was extremely curious and sat nearby to eavesdrop, he did not hear anything that could satisfy his curiosity.

Occasionally, he heard them saying about riding without stopping for three days and three nights. Those words almost made the old man laugh.

Riding without stopping for three days and three nights? This is impossible! Even an exceptional person would not be able to do so due to exhaustion! When I was young, the Northwest Legion were already exceptionally good. At most, we would only be able to travel non-stop, for one day and one night.

Besides that, even when we marched in the army, we needed spare horses! These people rode for three days and three nights on one horse? Even their horses couldn't do it! If their horses were

exhausted, how could they fight?

Allier laughed to himself. He did not realize he had made the same mistake again. Those soldiers were not going to war. Why would they conserve the horse's energy? The horses were tired, which was why they stopped to rest.

He looked at the people eating together on the table and pursed his lips. Hmph. Youngsters these days like to brag a lot. Three days and three nights? Do you think you are the 'Lightning God's Whip' from those years?

Allier then stood up and stretched his waist and told his servants to bring him another bottle of wine. As he recalled his heroic past, he could not help but drink a few more glasses of wine.

He had already grown old and his capacity for wine was not as good as when he was younger. After drinking two bottles of wine, his face became hot, and he became confused. Those guests sitting beside him were laughing and joking. They started to gather around him and requested him to tell about his past.

The drunken old man could not help but open his shirt to reveal his muscles and scars. He spoke of those days when his team was ordered to launch a surprise attack on the grassland barbarians.

As he spoke, his saliva flew everywhere. He was so agitated that he moved his hands in a slashing action as if he was slashing the barbarian. Some people even craned their necks to catch the story, ignoring the occasional spit in their face. As they listened they applauded.

As the old man was drunk, he started to exaggerate. Towards the end, he exaggerated his heroic deeds and actions several times more than reality.

"I cleaved the barbarian's shield into two then I cut off his head and kicked...." He was speaking happily when he heard someone accidentally cough out his drink and started laughing.

Allier froze for a moment and looked at the person who was laughing. It was one of that dozen of people. They were sitting and eating as they listened to him brag.

Allier became angry. He had been telling stories of his heroism for so many years, and that was the first time in a long while that someone had doubted his story. Many years ago, one of the security soldiers did not believe in his story. As a result, that man was cursed and scolded so badly that he longer dared to provoke Allier. Hmph, young men, when I was fighting in the Northwest, you were still drinking milk!

“Hey! That boy over there! What are you laughing at? Is what I said so dubious?” The old man shouted.

The soldier who laughed shook his head and replied, “Boss. I believe what you said. However, you said that you cleaved the barbarian’s shield into two. That part cannot be right... The Great Moon Kingdom’s scimitar warriors do not use shields.”

Allier’s face turned red, and he was unable to utter a single word in reply. How could he make a fool of himself in front of so many people? He decided to carry on the lie and asked, “What do you know? The grassland barbarians who didn’t use shields were just the ordinary ones. The ones that used shields were all skilled cavalymen and high ranked warriors!”

The soldier shook his head again and replied, “This is even more wrong. All the high ranked warriors of the Great Moon Kingdom are all leaders of the cavalry. They are born fierce and brave. As a result, they do not like to use shields. They also do not like to use strong armor to show off their valor. They often charge forward with only a leather armor. Those that wore serious armor or shields will be ridiculed as cowards.”

Allier angrily said, “Are you saying I only killed cowards? What does a boy like you know? Have you been to the Northwest? Have you even seen those barbarians? I was in the Northwest Legion,

and I had killed more than seventeen people!”

“More than seventeen!” The person’s face showed a strange expression, and then he exclaimed, “In that case, your military merit was not low! In accordance with the rules of the Northwest Legion, those that killed five enemies would be rewarded with fifty gold coins. Those that killed ten people would be rewarded with one hundred gold coins and would be promoted as a small captain. During those days, killing about seventeen people was enough to become the bodyguard of the Regiment Commander!”

The person’s voice was full of respect, but it was like a thorn to Allier’s ears, and it felt as if the man was mocking him. He knew that his military record showed that he only killed two barbarians. In fact, one of them was already dead on the battlefield, and what he did was to personally behead that dead man.

The old man spoke angrily, “A young person like you knows nothing! Do you think anyone could become a Regiment Commander’s bodyguard?”

“Then you must be a small captain!” The man asked not knowing that he was treading on thin ice.

Allier could no longer hold his story. The people around him knew that he was just a cavalryman and not even a small captain. Now he could not even brag.

Allier stood up and shouted, “Little bastard, you know nothing! Your grandfather was talking about things years ago! When I was riding in the Northwest, you were not even born!” After that, he pulled out his rusty scimitar and said, “Have you seen this before? Let me tell you! This is the barbarian’s weapon! It is the grassland’s best scimitar!”

The other guests had been giving curious glances at the dozen people when they first came in. They had already considered those people suspicious. These guests started whispering among themselves when they saw those people and the old man having a

debate. They happily watched the new incident like travelers who were always seeking for novelty psychologically.

What that old man said had hurt the feelings of the young man. The young man then became angry and wanted to refute his story. A man beside him, who seemed to be the leader of the dozen men, then shouted, "Shut up! Have you forgotten His Excellency's order? Do not say anymore!" The leader was just a few years older than the others. At that moment, he had a serious expression. The man, who spoke earlier, then lowered his head and kept quiet.

The leader then stood up and loudly said, "Boss, my companion is drunk and talked nonsense. Please do not be bothered by him." After that, he softly but firmly said, "Once you finish eating, go upstairs!"

At the same time, his men immediately put down their forks and knives and stood up. They then turned and walked towards the stairs.

However, that young man was still a bit resentful. When he walked by the old man, he deliberately made a large movement and inadvertently pushed aside his coat. The old man was stunned at what he saw. Hanging below the coat was a scimitar. He could clearly see the pattern on the sheath of the scimitar, and there was a wolf head on the handle of the scimitar.

The moment those men left to go upstairs, Allier felt relieved.

As he had been in the Northwest for many years, he understood the meaning of the wolf head on the scimitar.

When the late Duke had learned how powerful the scimitars of the barbarians were, he deliberately established a new army that used scimitars. Their scimitars had a wolf head carved on the handle, and they were known as the Wolf Fang Army.

At that time, the Wolf Fang were warriors selected out from the Northwest Legion. As a result, it could be said that the entire Wolf

Fang Army of twenty thousand soldiers were elite cavalymen of the Northwest Legion. The soldiers of the Northwest Legion regarded entering the Wolf Fang as the highest glory.

However, the late Duke was later transferred from the Northwest Legion to become the Commander of the 'Lightning God's Whip'. The Wolf Fang also followed the late Duke and was transferred to the Central Cavalry.

In other words, those young people were soldiers of the Wolf Fang Army. They were the real 'Lightning God's Whip'.

Allier immediately felt dejected. He had just bragged about his military exploits in front of the most elite soldiers of the Empire. The young officer he had met earlier was probably a high-ranked noble. Perhaps, he was one of the commanders serving under the current young Duke.

That was not someone he got to see in normal days.

Feeling angry, Allier stopped talking about his story and stopped drinking. He dispersed everyone and went out for some fresh air.

Allier unknowingly walked to the stables and looked at the dozen of sturdy horses. As he used to be a cavalryman, he understood horses. With one look, he could see that the horses were really good horses. Not only the cavalry of his son's local garrison, even the Northwest Legion during his time did not have such good horses.

In addition, the officers of the Empire had been embezzling money. That was something that everybody knew. As a result, the horses used by the cavalries were mostly inferior. That was because there was a huge difference in prices between a good horse and a bad horse. The price difference naturally entered the pockets of those greedy officers.

Allier could not help but walk up and gently stroke the horses' heads. It had been a long time since he last saw such good horses.

While he was deep in his thoughts he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his back. There was a sharp object pointed at his back. As he was about to turn his head, he heard a voice, “Do not move!”

Allier immediately tightened up the muscles in his body. By virtue of experience, he could feel that it was a sword behind his back.

That voice sounded a little vague. Despite the other party’s effort to cover up, the experienced Allier could tell that the person was a woman.

“Are you the owner of this inn? Why do you come out here to look at these horses? What are you plotting?”

Allier suddenly twisted his body and moved one step away from the sword. He then turned around and tried to grab the other party.

A man behind Allier gave a wry smile. As Allier turned around, he felt pain in his ribs. After that, he felt like he was paralyzed and could not move.

As a result, not only he could not grab the other party, he also could not even see the man’s clothes.

The man who was still behind Allier laughed bitterly and spoke, “Speak honestly. What are you trying to do?” Although his back was facing the other person, Allier suddenly felt a cold pain throughout his body. The cold killing intent made Allier tremble.

Allier gritted his teeth and answered, “I am not trying to do anything! I just wanted to see these horses! I used to be a soldier! When I saw these people, and they looked like soldiers, I felt curious and came out to look at their horses! This is an inn! It is not a scamming business!”

There was a moment of silence and then the voice spoke, “Well, I believe you.” Suddenly, two gold coins flew out from behind him and dropped on the ground in front of Allier.

“Take these two gold coins. Use the best fodder for these horses. They will need to hurry through the journey tomorrow.” After that, the man behind Allier no longer made any sound.

Allier suddenly felt relieved. The murderous aura that made him grow tensed had disappeared. When he looked back, he did not see anybody, neither man nor woman.

He felt himself grow soft in his knees when the cold wind blew against his cold sweat. He then looked at the shiny gold coins on the floor and bent down to pick them up. He felt confused as he looked at the heavy gold coins in his hands.

Suddenly, he saw a shadow on the ground casted by the moonlight. Allier was so shocked that he could not help but look up. He saw a man standing on the roof of the horse shed.

That man stood under the moon and his face was hidden in the dark. He wore gray clothing and carried a strange longbow.

Allier was so shocked that he wanted to scream.

The man suddenly stretched out a finger and placed it in front of his mouth. He then shook his head.

Allier, after all, was someone who had been to the battlefield, so he immediately calmed down. He looked at the man standing on the horse shed. In the night, his clothes were fluttering, making him look like a ghost.

The man pointed at the stables, and then he pointed at the gold coins. After that, he made a gesture.

Allier's eyes lit up as he recognized the signal used in the army. It meant, ‘feed the horses’, ‘tomorrow morning’ and ‘travel quickly’.

He was stunned for just a moment, and with a flash, the figure vanished...

This is one hell of a night. Allier thought to himself.

Chapter 136: Fierce Battle at Night!

When Rody entered his room, Sky's lazy expression disappeared as he looked at Rody seriously. He slowly walked towards the corridor and smiled as he breathed in the cold night air.

“Boy, you are truly an interesting person... to have so many people stalking you all along the way.” He slowly closed his eyes as if he were listening to the sound of the wind. When he opened his eyes, he whispered. “Hm... One of them is that girl we met in the mountains. The other one is an interesting person. He seems to have been following us since we entered the city...”

Sky sighed as his smile faded. He then pursed his lips and said, “Who cares, I just want to watch your masquerade. I want to see how you continue playing that interesting impostor. As long as I get to watch undisturbed, everything will be fine.” After that, Sky slowly walked away.

Rody sat in his room and watched the flickering flames from the candles on the wall.

Frankly speaking, Rody did not want to stop and rest. If he could, he would immediately sprout a pair of wings and fly back to the Imperial Capital. However, even if he did not need to rest, his horses did. When he looked at his extremely exhausted subordinates, he had no choice but agree to their suggestion.

However, what could he do when he returned to the Imperial Capital?

To fight with the Emperor over a woman would be laughable. Even if his opponent was not the Emperor, what did he have that gave him the privilege? After all, at that moment, he was still Nicole's ‘little brother’.

Rody stood in front of a mirror and looked at his handsome face, deep eyes and blonde hair. It would be a lie to say that Rody had

never been secretly delighted at having this handsome appearance.

Rody was secretly delighted when his yin yang face suddenly became handsome. But at that moment, he really hated this face.

He hated the face that brought him countless power and glory. Even more so, he hated his identity.

I just want to be me! I do not want to be Seth! I do not want to be the Duke of the Tulip Family! I do not want to be... her little brother!" Rody thought as he forcefully rubbed his face. He rubbed his face in hope that his face would fall off...

After that, Rody thought of Nicole...

He remembered that night when he was at the stable of the Tulip Family mansion, He saw Nicole crying helplessly in the shed— a gentle, helpless, young girl; a girl carrying the burdens of her family...

There were those who said that once a person was caught in a relationship, it would be difficult to wake up.

Because of a word she said, Rody was able to take the arduous training. Day in day out, he was like a horse under the whip of Instructor Carter to cultivate himself. Day in day out, he had to study a variety of strange things from the detestable scholars.

Because of a word she said, Rody went to war without batting an eye. He was also able to draw his weapon and take the lives of his enemies.

Because of a word she said, Rody had transformed from a simple juvenile to a famous 'killer' general.

However, that bastard Emperor! That bastard who should have died a thousand deaths!

I am at the frontline, shedding blood for the Empire and in the mountains dealing with monsters like Wuya. From the Northwest to the South, I have traveled thousands of miles and in exchange.

This is my reward?

“Haha...” Rody gave a tragic laugh and there was a trace of malice in his eyes.

“I will not be weak,” Rody looked at himself in the mirror and spoke in a low voice. “I will not be weak! In the Northwest, ever since hundreds of my companions had sacrificed their lives in exchange for my safety, I am no longer the same person as before!”

“The Emperor? Hmm...” Rody slowly pulled out his sword. He ran his finger across the sharp blade edge, making a low crisp sound, and spoke in a cold voice, “I don’t care if it’s the Emperor or the Empire! If you want to take away my beloved, I will not hesitate to fight back, even if it’s me against the whole world! Even if it’s a heavenly god or beast, I vow to destroy him with my sword!”

Rody did not notice that when he was agitated and saying all that, the black dragon imprint on his left arm started to wriggle.

Dark quietly sat on the roof and looked at the moon in the sky as if he was meditating. He held his chin in his hands as he looked at the sky and gave a meaningful smile.

“How long do you plan on looking at me?” He suddenly sighed.

There was silence as if only the wind was replying.

Dark then stood up and stretched before he lightly said, “Go back. The wind is strong tonight, and the weather might change.” He paused for a moment before he slowly said again, “I do not know why you are following the Duke, and I do not know if your motives are the same as mine. However, I hope you do not have any ill intent. Whoever it is, for the next ten years, those who wish to harm the Duke would first need to do one thing.”

He walked on the long gutter on the roof and calmly said, “That is to walk over my dead body.”

After he said that, he slowly floated down from the roof like a

leaf and disappeared into the night.

The silence of the night was restored for one moment before it was once again broken by an ear-piercing laughter. A hoarse voice, with a strange accent, shouting out an inexplicable song.

“The river frogs croaked noisily.

Croak! Croak! Croak! Oh, how frustrating for the Lord.

Gulp down with a mug of wine happily.

Croak! Croak! Croak! Oh, where did they go?”

That weird song was repeated over and over again and finally caused countless people to curse at him. The singer became more and more excited. He then started to sing louder and his tone got higher.

One of the servants in the inn had an embarrassed expression. He looked at Allier and bitterly said, “Boss... you see. Don't know what's wrong with that guy...so noisy... you see...”

Allier also showed a strange expression. He thought for a moment, then stomped his feet and spoke in a soft voice, “Ignore him! Let him be! I cannot stop him from making noise!”

Sky held a bottle of wine in his hand and drank another mouthful. After that, he shouted that verse and drank yet another mouthful. He heartily sang and loudly laughed.

“Fascinating! Damn fascinating! I have not done anything so fascinating for hundreds of years!” He then listened for a moment and said, “The two small toads have really run away... Looks like my casual singing has scared them away. Wait a minute...” Suddenly, in a flash, the fat body disappeared from his place.

That night, some clouds drifted and gradually covered the bright moonlight.

A row of black clothed figures appeared outside, near the low walls of the inn. They wore the same clothing. They had also

wrapped their sharp swords in black cloth in case they reflect the light.

“Have you checked properly?” One of them whispered in a hoarse voice.

Another person from behind nodded his head.

The man who spoke nodded his head and lightly said, “Good! Master has given the order. The reward is ten thousand gold coins for beheading that boy! I don’t need to say more about the rest! He has only brought a few bodyguards with him. However powerful they are, there is still a limit! Don’t leave anyone alive. Kill all of them!”

That man from behind hesitated and asked, “Are you sure? We went all the way to the Purple Leaf City, but we achieved nothing. We never expected this boy to secretly return to the Imperial Capital... Shouldn’t we first report this to Master? If he secretly returned to the Imperial Capital, it is also a crime with a death sentence. Maybe we don’t even need to raise our hands! Let us first tell Master Simao and have him decide what to do.”

The first person who spoke looked back and gave an awe-inspiring gaze as he asked, “Are you afraid? The young boy of the Tulip Family is just a Grade 4 swordsman. Don’t tell me you are afraid?”

The person at the back replied coldly, “Afraid? Hmph. A Grade 4 swordsman is not even worth my attention. However, Master has given strict orders that we must not make mistakes in this matter. Regardless of what happens, we cannot expose our identities. Aren’t you afraid that you might cause trouble for Master?”

“Hey...” The person in front glared and continued, “The chance to gain merit is right in front of you. If you are afraid, then leave!”

After that, the man’s figure distorted and vanished in a puff of black smoke!

“Hmph... Damn fellow. Let's see how you are going to fail! Idiot, does he really think this target is so easy to kill? I think that fatty beside him is suspicious!” That person behind whispered and sighed. The other people looked coldly at him before they walked through the wall.

If anyone were to see that, they would doubt their own eyes. Those figures did not jump over the wall nor used any other method. The green stone wall, in front of them, was like air to them. They casually walked up and went through the wall. Their bodies disappeared and reappeared on the other side.

That man then gave a wry smile after he saw his companions walk in. “A gang of people who do not know the difference between life and death... It takes a stupid leader to train stupid subordinates!” His eyes then glinted as he gave a cruel laugh. “Oh well, I might as well help you all. Leave that fatty to me. His flesh and blood look delicious.”

That man smiled and revealed his white teeth. After that, he raised his black cloak and disappeared into the night.

Two Wolf Fang bodyguards guarded downstairs, just below Rody's room. Although it was in the middle of the night and they had been rushing for several days, they were still spirited and were on guard vigilantly.

Suddenly, one of them showed a serious expression and whispered to his companion, “Can you smell it?”

“Yes...” His companion seemed tense as he replied, “Seems like the smell of blood...”

Before he could finish his words, his eyeballs turned white and a clicking sound was heard. In the dark. A pair of hands had stretched out of thin air and snapped his neck. He then slowly collapsed next to the other guard.

However, before he died, he had completed his duty. He had

forcefully flung out his scimitar as a last ditch effort.

“Clang!” The scimitar fiercely flew out and hit the ground. The others upstairs were immediately warned. More than a dozen voices then shouted simultaneously, “What happened?!”

There were rapid footsteps as a few Wolf Fang soldiers converged from different directions in the corridor. They gathered into groups of twos and threes and formed a triangular formation. Everyone held a scimitar and rushed to the front.

“Shoot!” Suddenly, a sound of something being shot could be heard in the dark. The shooting sound was uninterrupted. When the battle-hardened Wolf Fang soldiers heard that, they immediately realized they were in a bad situation. They then crouched and looked for shelter. Some hid behind the stone pillars on the corridor while others just laid down on the floor.

However, they did not expect that the things being shot out were not arrows. There were a few muffled popping sounds and then a few trails of black smoke shot over at unparalleled speed.

Those that tried to stay hidden could not protect themselves from the black smoke. The three Wolf Fang swordsmen that hid behind the pillars groaned and fell.

The captain of the bodyguards whispered, “The opponents are magicians! Be careful!” He paused for a moment and then commanded, “Wolf Fang... Shoot!”

Although they did not have any bow and arrow, the remaining Wolf Fang warriors immediately stood up. They took their scimitars and flung them out. Several lights shot out as they flung their scimitars. As soon as their scimitars left their hands, they immediately raced from their positions.

They understood that ordinary soldiers could not defeat magicians. Their only chance was to get close to the magicians as they were all warriors.

Without a doubt, their training was strict and their tactics were correct. Unfortunately, their opponents were not normal magicians.

In the dark, those men in black clothes did not expect that their opponents would suddenly rush over. They had just dodged the scimitars but their opponents were already right in front of them.

The head of the black clothed men then stood up and whispered, "Good! You guys are skillful." He revealed himself. He lifted his black cloak, revealing the blood red lining and turned up the high collars. His silhouette was like a black lightning as he then rushed ahead.

Before anyone could see what happened, the nearest Wolf Fang warrior cried out and fell down. In the dark, the air immediately reeked with a strong smell of blood... However, the lightning-like figure did not stop and continued to rush towards the next person.

The other black clothed figures also rushed forward. They were bare handed but they rushed at an incredible speed towards the Wolf Fang warriors. Miserable cries started to follow. The ordinary soldiers were like infants and could not defend against these mighty, black clothed figures.

The soldiers felt themselves come into contact with their opponents. However, before they could act, they felt a severe pain at their necks and lost consciousness.

As the uproar continued, the captain of the bodyguards immediately retreated and shouted, "Protect the His Excellency the Duke! Retreat!"

"Retreat? Too late..." A cold voice suddenly came from behind the captain. The captain's expression changed, and he reacted extremely fast, immediately using a backhand wave.

"Clang!" There was a loud clash. He felt his sword slashed against something extremely hard and stopped there. The captain's heart

sank. He had always been confident of his strength. He had desperately used all of his strength in that attack. He was even confident of splitting a rock into two.

The captain's hands felt a strange suction effect, then his strength inexplicably disappeared. He just had enough time to turn around and take a look. He noticed his sword was grabbed by a black hand and a pair of red eyes was looking at him. The figure then opened his mouth to reveal two sharp fangs ... to sink into his neck...

The captain was desperate and frightened. As he closed his eyes, he heard a light rustling sound.

That black figure beside the captain suddenly trembled and uttered a sharp, loud scream. A wolf fang arrow, with a burst of red light, had pierced through the figure. After a miserable cry, the figure disintegrated into a mass of black mist and disappeared.

A tall figure jumped onto the roof with a huge long bow, He grabbed some more wolf fang arrows from his back and started to shoot.

He was fast like lightning and had shot five arrows in one breathe. Besides that, four of his arrows had found their targets with the last one being avoided by an extremely quick black-clothed person. Those shot by the arrows screamed and disintegrated into masses of black mist and disappeared.

Dark saw that the black-clothed figures had started to react. They threw open their cloaks and stretching out their arms, began to fly towards him. Dark drew his sword and cried out, "Wolf Fang! Quickly! Protect the Duke. I will handle this!"

Chapter 137: Absolutely Won't Yield

Dark retreated swiftly, racing up the slope on the steep roof. It all seemed so effortless as he seemed to be running on a flat surface. He then pointed his sword at the black-clothed man.

“Who are you?” The black-clothed man’s voice sounded sharp as he shouted, “How come you have ‘blood destroying arrows’?”

Dark's forehead started to have cold sweat, but he still sneered and replied, “Looks like I am right. You all are really [vampires](#). What do you think of those arrows that I shot just now?”

The black-clothed man burst out into laughter and replied, “What a joke! Are you relying on those 'blood destroying arrows'? You have not mastered the skill, and even if you had, you would only be able to deal with a few of my unworthy subordinates. However, I never expected that young boy of the Tulip Family to have a person like you with him.”

He slowly stretched out his black claws and continued, “Boy, you used 'blood destroying arrows', and that means you are the vampires' enemy. Tonight, you definitely must die!”

Dark laughed and shouted, “Nonsense! Let's see whether someone like you, who is neither man nor ghost, will die first or if I will die first!” Dark suddenly put his index finger in his mouth and bit it. He then dripped a drop of his blood onto his sword and silently chanted some kind of incantation. Suddenly, a red light emerged from his sword. The red light became more and more dazzling. Dark started to sweat more profusely, and he looked pale.

The black-clothed man seemed to be afraid of the light. He hid behind his black cloak to protect his face. He then revealed his bloody red eyes and shouted, “Good! I had never thought that you were actually an exorcist! Looks like there is a big harvest for me today!”

“An exorcist? Haha, I have not heard this term in a long time.” Dark laughed somewhat sadly.

“Since you are an exorcist, then there is a better reason why I cannot let you live!”

Dark’s voice sounded weak, but he still ferociously swung his sword and shouted, “Come on! Old monster! Let's see if your claws are harder than my sword!”

After that, Dark rushed forward, and the sword in his hand swung like the wind. The black-clothed man seemed afraid of the red light from the sword and kept moving backward to evade. Occasionally, he was too slow and when his cloak caught the red light, it immediately burst into a green flame. He cried out in alarm and retreated even further.

Dark continued to shout as he swung his sword faster and faster as if he was not concerned about his life. He attacked blindly and did not defend.

However, the black-clothed man had already adapted and calmed down. He had ascertained that the exorcist was not very skillful. He only had average ability. He was initially shocked by the 'blood destroying arrows'. However, he had calmed down. With that speed, Dark would not be able to hurt him.

Dark’s breathing became heavier, and he started to slow down. The black-clothed man sneered at him and said, “Boy, you actually know how to use ‘[blood destroying blood](#)’. Haha, let’s see how long you can last! Do you have so much blood to consecrate your sword? The longer you use this technique, the more blood you will consume! You better let go... Let me gently bite you once, and you will be freed... You must be having a tough time trying to hold on...Let me gently bite you... You will be freed... Will no longer need to suffer... You are quickly using up all your blood... Just let go...”

The man’s tone became softer as he spoke with an evil glint in his

eyes. Sweat gathered on Dark's forehead, and his movements became slower. He was as pale as paper and had already reached his limit.

“Give up... my subordinates have already gone to kill the Duke of the Tulip Family. Your actions no longer have any meaning... exorcist...” The man spoke with an unusual intonation.

Dark gritted his teeth and shouted, “Shut your damn mouth!” He ferociously bit his tongue and sprayed a mouthful of blood all over his sword. The red light from the sword became more vigorous. From afar, it looked like a red light was dancing in Dark's hand, forcing the black clothed man to continuously retreat.

That black clothed man was busy dodging and could no longer use his words to confuse Dark. The man's eyes showed excitement and viciousness. He was in high spirits. Suddenly, he felt a pain in his back. He hurriedly dodged to the side. However, he was too slow and a dagger had pierced his body. He could see the blade protruding out from his chest. He cried out as he floated up into mid air like a bat. After that, he angrily shouted, “Bastard! You actually dared to backstab me! Who is it?”

He looked everywhere but he could only see the exorcist on the roof.

Dark staggered and whispered, “Is that you? Are you the one that helped me?”

A soft voice suddenly replied, “Don't worry. I have already injured him. Quickly retreat. Go and look for the Duke of the Tulip Family. Something is strange about him tonight. Despite all the ruckus outside, he does not seem to have any reaction.”

Dark shook his head and said, “Leave quickly, whoever you are. Although I cannot see you, you must quickly leave! Leave before he notices you! Your attack will not kill him. Go and find the Duke of the Tulip Family. You must make sure he safely escape!”

In the dark, the voice sounded urgent, “What? I had just stabbed through him!”

Dark smiled and looked at the flying black figure. “Stupid, have you ever seen ordinary people fly like that? Even a high ranked magician cannot fly so easily... In other words, they are not human! You will not understand! Run quickly! Run before he finds you! I can only hold him back for a while! Find that fatty! Shit. Where did that fatty go? Find that fatty, and you will be able to save the Duke.”

The voice replied in a soft voice, “I went to look. When you were busy fighting just now, I already went. However, that guy had disappeared...”

The voice could only say a little more before there was a long shout. Suddenly, the black figure in the air stopped. His pale face had turned green, and he revealed the fangs in his mouth. He grabbed the hilt of the dagger that was stuck on his back and then pulled it out, bit by bit. He held the dagger in his hand and looked at it.

A long and cruel laughter echoed in the air. “Despicable person! Do you think this ordinary thing could kill me? You have angered me! You actually dared to hurt my noble body! You actually made me bleed! Exorcist! You should know the punishments for hurting our body!”

After that, the black figure’s body then opened up. His black cloak turned into a pair of black wings that slowly flapped in the air like a real, giant bat.

“Run! Quickly run!” Dark shouted. “Find the Duke and then quickly escape! If you cannot escape, find the nearest religious building to hide! This is the only way you can save your life!” Dark once again pointed his sword to the sky and sprayed a mouthful of blood onto the sword.

The sword gently trembled and hummed as if it could not

support anymore. Dark exerted himself and muttered, “Do you still not understand? They are not human... they are vampires!”

Dark then gave a desperate smile and said, “If you manage to escape, tell the Duke that... the person who promised to wait for him for ten years may not be able to keep his promise.”

After that, Dark’s body suddenly soared a little bit. He held his sword and shouted. His body then shot towards the black figure in the sky.

...

At that moment, Rody was sleeping.

That night, after he making a vow in front of the mirror, he felt extremely murky. There seemed to be some kind of power boiling in his body. It was as if something was trying to break out of his body. He managed to calm himself down, but the energy in his body, which he could hardly control, seemed to have some kind of reaction. Masses of fighting energy were surging all over his body and seemed chaotic. Finally, Rody felt a powerful force trying to tear apart his heart. He shouted and spat out blood before fainting...

Although he was unconscious, his brain continued to roar. He could hear thunder bombarding his ears. The endless thundering sound made him dizzy, and he felt like his head was about to burst.

Not knowing after much later, he gradually regained a little bit of consciousness and found that he was no longer in the room. He felt his body shaking non-stop. Rody also felt extremely weak, as if someone had emptied his body. He even needed to take a long time just to open his eyes.

Finally, Rody saw his surroundings and found himself being carried on someone’s back. The person carrying him was the captain of his bodyguards. The captain was breathing heavily and seemed to have great difficulty.

“What's... wrong...” Rody's voice was weak.

When the captain heard the Duke speak, he immediately whispered, “Your Excellency the Duke, you have finally woken up! Tonight, you fainted in your room... this is not the time for this. Your Excellency, someone broke in here trying to assassinate you. Your subordinates were desperately fighting them but were not able to hold out any longer. Now I am carrying Your Excellency to escape...”

Rody was surprised and his voice became louder. “What happened?” He looked around and saw that he had already left the inn. He was now surrounded by trees and grass.

“Where are the others?” Rody whispered but it seemed his tongue was not behaving accordingly.

Before the captain could reply, an old voice said from behind, “Your subordinates were mostly killed. Your Excellency the Duke! Duke of the Tulip Family!”

As that person talked, he walked up to Rody's side. Rody opened his eyes and found that that person was the owner of the inn. That old man seemed to have mixed feelings-a bit of sadness and a bit of excitement. It looked weird to have two emotions mixed together.

“You...” The owner of the inn had already rushed to the side of the captain. He then faced the captain who was carrying Rody as he shed tears. “I did not know you are the young Duke of the Tulip Family! I...no, this subordinate was formerly under the command of the late Duke. The inn you entered today is under this subordinate's management. Tonight, I came out to look when those villains attacked, then I realized something was wrong... If your guards did not risk their lives to defend and shouted to protect the Duke, I would not know that you are the young Duke of the Tulip Family.”

As he spoke, Allier's tears continued to flow. He held a rusty scimitar in his hand. He then straightened his chest and said, “This

subordinate then followed your captain to protect Your Excellency the Duke. However, the assassins are too skillful. We could not defend... Most of your subordinates were already killed in the inn... Those assassins killed everyone they saw... Most probably, there are not many still alive there...”

Rody was startled and he murmured. “Dead... all... dead...?”

Rody did not know where he suddenly got the strength and shouted, “Let me down!”

The captain exclaimed, “Your Excellency the Duke!”

Rody shouted again, “Stop!”

The captain trembled and could not help but let Rody down. Rody struggled to stand and then he took a deep breath. His eyes showed a deep gaze and then he whispered, “Everyone is dead? What about my friend?”

The captain whispered, “I do not know... Tonight, I did not see him... Presumably, he is also...”

Rody shook his head and replied, “He will not die.” He paused for a moment and then he asked, “Tell me, what do those assassins look like?”

The captain whispered, “Those people... they are not like humans. The Wolf Fang warriors were like babies to them and did not have the ability to fight back... They seem to... bite people’s necks and drink their blood.”

Rody was startled and gave a wry smile. He showed a determined gaze and said, “Turn around, go back!”

“What!” The captain and the old man exclaimed, “Your Excellency, this cannot be done! With your current condition, we cannot defeat them! Your subordinate's responsibility is to ensure Your Excellency's safety! We definitely cannot let Your Excellency risk your life!”

Rody emitted a murderous aura and coldly asked, “Have you seen the Duke of the Tulip Family escape in defeat? Have you ever seen the Duke of the Tulip Family desert his men and escape on his own?”

Rody’s tone was as cold as ice. That captain could not help but tremble.

Rody did not seem to want a reply. He faintly said, “I have seen it before! I wrongfully did this once in the Northwest! I swore not to let this happen again! Go back!”

“Your Excellency!” The captain knelt down and softly said, “Your Excellency! You shoulder a heavy responsibility for the Empire! The Empire can afford to lose a few Wolf Fang soldiers, but the Empire cannot afford to lose the Duke of the Tulip Family!”

Rody's body shook and his face showed a strange expression. He whispered so softly that only he could hear what he said, “Duke of the Tulip Family? The Empire has not had a Duke of the Tulip Family for a long time already...”

Rody then gazed fiercely and said, “Even if there were millions of reasons, I am still a man. There are some things that obviously should not be done, but they must be done!”

He supported himself and struggled to walk two steps and suddenly shouted, “Why? Why snatch away my energy? You have turned me into a powerless and useless person!” With great effort, he pulled out his sword and ruthlessly held it in his hand. He sneered, “If God wants me to be like this, then I purposely want to defy his will!”

Rody looked at the sky and roared loudly. With his head high and chest out, he struggled, step by step, back towards the inn..

血族的妖孽. Literally, “evil descendants of the Blood Family” . The only creature I know of that are ‘people’, can ‘vanish’, night themed, and bites necks are vampires. The only other thing I

found was a Chinese novel with a similar name about vampires and a particular breed of wormy vampires.

以血破血 yi xue po xue. By means of blood to destroy blood.

Chapter 138: Mad Genius (1)

“Come out! Come out, quickly!” Sky spoke lazily.

“Still don't want to come out? If you do not come out, I will not be polite anymore! Do you think I can't catch a small bat?” Sky pursed his lips and sat down.

“I will count to three! One!”

“Two! You still don't want to come out?”

“Really don't want to come out? Alright! Three!” Sky stood up, and he was becoming impatient.

“Are you anxious?” A clear voice sounded from the depth of the woods. “Going for a walk on such a beautiful night is truly pleasant.”

A tall and slim figure appeared from behind the trees. He was wrapped in a long black cloak. His face looked delicate and pale like a sickly person. When the moon shined on him, there was a very long shadow. He looked very relaxed and comfortable under the moonlight.

“You should be grateful to me. If I did not bring you so far away, how could you enjoy such a beautiful night scene?” He gently smiled.

Sky shook his head and replied, “Forget it. How far have you taken me? How long was it? We have run for more than a hundred miles. Where is there such a walk? At first, I was quite interested in toying with you. However, now... I am getting impatient.” Sky waved his hand and continued, “Come on, after dealing with you, I am going back to sleep.”

The man gently shook his head and lightly said, “Dealt with me? Sigh. You... It is such a beautiful and elegant night, you must not utter such murderous words... Look...” The man stretched out one of his pale and almost transparent fingers. “Look at those flowers,

they are so afraid of your murderous aura that they wilted.”

Sky was not agitated at all but instead waited for the other party to finish talking nonsense. He then laughed, “You, little bat. Didn’t you bring me in circles, the whole night, to draw me away? Now that I have already accompanied you for the entire night, you would no longer be able to escape even if you could fly.”

“Oh, is that so...” The man laughed, “You knew I was drawing you away from your companions! Aren’t you worried that our people would hurt them?”

Sky froze for a moment and then he laughed. “Hahahaha...”

That man frowned and asked, “Is it very funny? Fatty, it is really rude to laugh at others like this.”

Sky continued to laugh loudly and then asked, “Do you really think that the few of you could hurt that boy?”

That man shrugged his shoulders and answered, “Isn't it so? He is just an ordinary mortal. Even if he is a high ranked warrior, so what? It is currently night time, and the night is our world...”

Sky shook his head. “Wrong! You are wrong! Do you think that I am so stupid to just follow you running around? Let me tell you. I am extremely confident of that boy. Not to say only a few of you, small bats... even if the old bat was here, he could not even hope to injure that boy. Now even I do not have the confidence of getting rid of that boy.”

“Oh?” The man froze in surprise for a moment before laughing.

“Little bat, what are you laughing at?” Sky glared at him.

“Why can’t I laugh?” The man closed his eyes.

He then showed an intoxicated expression and continued, “This is wonderful ... That fool is finally going to die... but I do not even need to bear any responsibility. Is there anything more wonderful than this in the world?”

“Uhh, lunatic...” Sky sighed. “No wonder people said that your clan is crazy. Looks like they are right.”

“Crazy, so what...” After another soft sigh, the man’s voice sounded peculiar, “There are a lot of crazy people in this world, not to mention us, who are half man and half ghost. Fatty, even if nothing would happen to that Duke of the Tulip Family, he definitely would not be able to fight so many of us. Even if he does not die, the same cannot be said for his men.”

Sky shrugged his shoulders and replied, “What has this got to do with me? Their lives have got nothing to do with me. The earlier one dies, the earlier he gets detached. What is the difference if one dies a few days earlier or a few days later?”

The man sighed softly. “Looks like I was wrong. You are even more cold-blooded than me. However, you may have forgotten. Those that were bitten by us will not die. Instead, they will...”

“Stop! Stop!” Sky shook his head. “The more you speak, the more I feel like vomiting! I do not want to think about those fangs of your clan... At least, I will try not to think about it...”

“Alright...” That man’s voice gradually became warmer. “Strange fatty, let’s find a way to enjoy this wonderful night.”

“Uhh.” Sky sighed. “[This is really preposterous...](#) Oh, not right, you are really a vampire. I saw that you are quite skilled. At first, I wanted to get rid of you along the way. However, you have actually learned how to use ‘Blood Escape’. So, I wanted to see what kind of genius your clan has... Hey, I guess you are about two hundred years old? You actually learned ‘Blood Escape’. That is extraordinary. However, I am disappointed because you are like the rest of the elders in your entire clan—outright crazy.”

“Oh!” The man smiled and asked, “In that case, what do you want, fatty?”

Sky glared back coldly and replied, “What do I want? I want to

twist off your neck!” After that, his body suddenly dashed out. In the dark, there seemed to be an oppressive shadow pouncing on the black-clothed man.

The man seemed to have already taken precautions. He gently rolled his cloak, and his figure then disappeared from the place.

Sky immediately stopped and cursed, “Little bat, do you have any more new tricks? Why are you using this ‘Blood Escape’ again? Do you really think I cannot catch you? Obediently stretch your neck over, so that I can twist it off. This will save us all the trouble! Hmm!”

Sky suddenly laughed as he pointed at his ears. “Little bat, did you notice? In just a short while, four of your companions had died. No... it was five of them. Haha... Are you feeling anxious now?”

A black figure suddenly appeared from above him. The figure, wrapped in a black cloak, was hanging upside down on a tree like a large bat.

“Why should I worry? After all, those who died were not my subordinates. It is better that they died. Let your Duke of the Tulip Family kill them all. Why should I bother? ”

Before the man could say anymore, Sky's eyes lit up; he stomped his feet and launched himself towards the figure.

The man gently smiled and his body disappeared again. Sky hit the tree branch above him with his head. The branch slowly fell to the ground.

“Damn, you used this trick again! Do you think your clan's ‘Blood Escape’ technique is really invincible? Do you really think I have no other way to attack you?”

“That’s right, fatty. If you have any other methods, you would have killed me on our way here!” The voice came from a branch a few meters away. The man smiled as he stood on a branch that was

as thick as a finger. As the wind blew, his body swayed together with the branches and he looked like a ghost.

“How irritating!” Sky coldly said, “Initially, I wanted to take it easy but it seems you will not be convinced unless I get serious.”

Sky suddenly closed his eyes and his lips moved a bit. After that, his obese body also disappeared.

“Oh! Is this your method to catch me? An invisibility technique?” The black-clothed man laughed and continued, “Do you think stealth is enough to catch me? Did you think that the Blood Clan’s ‘Blood Escape’ is just a stealth technique?”

Sky's voice sounded in the darkness. “I don't care what you say! Isn't this fair? We both cannot see each other.”

“Hahahaha.” The black-clothed man smiled. “Humans are truly humans. They are actually stupid! I admit that your stealth technique works as I cannot see you. However, the moment you talked, you were exposed... Ah!” Towards the end of his sentence, the man suddenly exclaimed.

The man forcefully fell off the branch, head first. He screamed as his body started to give out a black smoke. Before he landed, he already turned around and stood up in midair again. However, his elegant expression was gone.

“You actually dare to trick me?” His eyes gradually turned red, and his mouth had a trace of blood. “Despicable human!”

Sky laughed loudly and his body finally appeared beneath a tree. “How? If you can lie to me, why can't I lie to you? You, little bat... This is just a simple stealth technique, together with a duplication technique, and you already cannot cope already. I heard that those who could master the ‘Blood Escape’ within two hundred years are geniuses!”

“Hmph, I am certainly a genius!” The man smiled and spoke in a low voice, “Have you felt it? The human's aura is becoming

bleak... Fortunately, there is no full moon tonight. Do you want to go back and take a look?”

“Huh? You are really not afraid that I would wring off your head!”

见鬼 Jian gui, Can mean preposterous or something like ‘What the hell’. Individually, the word Jian would mean meet and Gui would mean ghost. On the other hand, xi xue gui 吸血鬼 vampires, could mean blood sucking ghost.

Chapter 139: Mad Genius (2)

The black-clothed man sighed. “Fatty, what kind of person are you? I have probed for a long time, and yet I still cannot tell when in the mainland was there a guy like you... Are you someone from Protoss?”

Sky spat hatefully and cursed, “You are the one from the Protoss! Even if the Pope stands in front of me, I will ignore him! Speak less nonsense and come down here! I will wring off your head and go back to sleep!”

“Hahahaha...” The black-clothed man laughed, and then he showed a strange expression. “Are you crazy? Wring off my noble head... This is truly an amusing joke.” His eyes then glowed red as his low voice shrouded the earth. “Show me your skill!”

The man then stretched his body and took a moment to grow a pair of black wings. He then soared into the air and opened up his arms as if he wanted to embrace the earth.

“Fatty, you should be honored... You are the third human who is qualified to have me taste your blood...” With a long string of shrewd laughter, that man in mid-air flew down at a high speed towards Sky like a large bat. Just like light, he moved so quickly that he immediately appeared in front of Sky.

Sky sighed and did not even attempt to dodge. Sky merely yawned and did not seem to be doing anything. Suddenly, there was a miserable scream. That guy from the Blood Clan boomeranged and flew out like a bird that broke its wings. He severely crashed into a tree. After that, the man fell head first and sprawled on the ground...

“Poor little bat, do you believe me now?” Sky laughed. “Your Blood Clan’s ancient technique, the ‘Blood Escape’, is like a gateway. If you had just fled, I probably would not be able to catch you. However, you actually dared try to attack me. You are just

courting death.”

Sky suddenly flashed. His posture did not change but he had reappeared in front of the vampire. He then stretched out his big fat hands, grabbed the vampire by his neck and lifted his whole body.

“Follow me back. I am catching you because you are still useful to me... If more than a dozen of the subordinates of the young Duke are really dead, he will definitely find fault with me.” Sky paused for a moment and then he continued in a soft voice, “I am not afraid of him, but the damn ‘Mystic Dragon Purge’ is really not fun.”

As he carried the vampire in his hands, Sky shot out like an arrow and headed back in the direction they came from.

“Hey, boy. I do not know if you’ll be happy or angry when you suddenly obtain a dozen vampire subordinates. This is certainly very interesting. Hahahaha.” The more Sky thought, the happier he was. His laughter filled the air as he floated under the night sky.

Rody had only taken two steps when the captain of the bodyguard and the old man, Allier, rushed over to him. One went to the left and the other to the right side of Rody and supported him.

“Do you two want to go together?” Rody sighed.

The captain spoke bravely, “Your Excellency the Duke, the Wolf Fang Army does not have any soldiers who are afraid to die!” He then looked at Allier and whispered, “You do not need to follow us and court death. You are no longer in the army and this does not have anything to do with you. You have already put in a lot of effort tonight. It would be best if you find a place to hide.”

Allier jumped and shouted angrily, “If you are not afraid of death, how could a old man like me be afraid of death? If you were to say this again, I will first teach you a bitter lesson!” Allier then

looked at Rody and said, “I used to work for the late Duke. How can people who fight under the Tulip Family’s banner shame the name of the Tulip Family! Today, I may be old, but I will still sacrifice my life to fight as well!”

Rody shook his head. He was going to say something but decided against it when he saw their determined expressions.

The three of them journeyed back for a little while when they heard the sound of the wind in the sky. They looked up and saw a huge black figure flying over. A pair of black wings were flapping in the night sky like a legendary demon.

The man in the sky saw Rody and the other two men. He suddenly shouted, and then he retracted his wings as he slowly descended.

When the black figure approached them, Rody noticed that the figure was carrying a person. The person’s eyes were closed and looked extremely pale. He seemed to have fainted. He was dressed in gray clothes and carried a longbow. The unconscious man was Dark.

The black-clothed figure finally touched the ground. He then gently tossed Dark aside as he looked at the three people with his red eyes. After that, that man chuckled and said, “Good! I have finally found you. The boy in the middle; you must be the Duke of the Tulip Family. If I were to kill you, Master Simao will be very happy.”

The man then stretched out his black claws as he moved towards Rody. The man’s legs did not move. They seemed stuck to the ground as he gently floated towards them.

Rody looked at the man bitterly as he struggled to raise his sword. However, before Rody could react, the captain had already roared loudly and rushed forward.

The captain had already dropped his scimitar much earlier. He

was currently using a normal sword that he had hastily grabbed during his escape. However, he was still the captain of the Duke's bodyguards and was carefully picked out of Sieg's twenty thousand Wolf Fang warriors. His strength had already reached the level of a Grade 3 swordsman. At that desperate moment, he slashed wildly and the sword created a wind filled with its energy.

The black-clothed vampire gave a cold smile and stretched out his claw to catch the sword. However, the moment he touched the blade of the sword, he felt a burning pain in his hand. He immediately withdrew his hand and involuntarily retreated back a few steps. Looking down he saw a small wound on his hand.

The vampire became furious. "Bastard! Tonight, you are the second person to injure my noble body!"

The captain of the bodyguards did not want to compromise. He took a deep breath and rushed forward unyieldingly. As he anxiously fought, he actually exceeded the strength of his level. Every slash came with a loud roar and spirited energy. He seemed to be at the point of almost achieving the critical level of fighting energy.

Allier, who was at the side, had also quietly grabbed his scimitar and moved up. He took advantage of an opening and attacked the vampire. This caused the vampire to jump angrily.

When the vampire fought with Dark earlier that night, he initially did not know that Dark was an exorcist. As a result, he was injured. Although the vampire finally won, he was already weakened. However, the vampire was arrogant. He believed that these were only a few mere humans and they could not defeat him. Thinking of earning merits, he had searched for Rody alone after defeating Dark.

The vampire screamed. Allier occasionally slashed at him and even if Allier actually cut him, he absolutely could not be mortally harmed. However, how could he allow a human within his

ordinary sword to harm his noble body? It would be a great shame, even if it was just his gorgeous cloak that was torn.

Finally, in his rage, he quickly stepped back. After that, the red color of his eyes became denser. He opened his mouth and, suddenly burst out a sharp whistle.

The whistling sound was so sharp it felt like the eardrums were being fiercely pierced by numerous needles. Those who heard the whistling sound felt like their heads were about to crack. The pain in the heads seemed to drain out all the energy in their bodies. The captain and Allier staggered. Allier staggered and fell to the ground.

The black clothed vampire then rushed forward and kicked the captain away. He then grabbed Allier's neck and made up his mind to wring off that unworthy old man's neck.

Suddenly a strong breeze blew and a bright light shot to his front. The vampire stretched out one of his claws to block. Kacha! His hand was actually pierced through by a sword.

The vampire screamed but only saw the Duke of the Tulip Family looking at him. The sword was presumably thrown by the Duke. He had never expected a human to have so much energy.

In his heart, the vampire thought that he had cultivated his body hundreds of years. Due to a sneak attack by the exorcist, he had gotten angry and had revealed his true body. Ordinary human swords could no longer hurt him. Even a Grade 3 swordsman, like the captain of the bodyguards, who was considered a skilled fighter by the ordinary people, was powerless against him. However, that sword casually thrown by the young Duke of the Tulip Family could actually pierce through his true body, which he had cultivated for hundreds of years.

The vampire screamed and pulled out the sword that had pierced through his hand. In a rage and disregarding his pain, he charged at Rody. Rody gritted his teeth, as he knew that he was weak at the

moment and was almost a disabled person. However, the only part that had power was his left hand and the power was way above his expectations.

Seeing that the other party had stretched his claws in front of him, Rody opened the palm of his right hand to protect his face. The vampire sneered, "Can you really block by using your hands? My claws can even penetrate a thick metal shield."

However, the vampire was shocked when he tried to grab Rody's arm and body with his claw. He felt a violent pain in his arm. It was like he had grabbed something that was solid iron. When he exerted force, he felt like his fingers were about to break.

A thought flashed in Rody's mind. So that is how it is!

Rody knew that he had covered himself with the Mystic Dragon's blood. At that time, Andy had told him that even the blood of an ordinary dragon was already enough to make a human body so powerful that it could not be harmed by an ordinary sword. What more, if the blood was from the world's most powerful 'Mystic Dragon'...

Sky had also told him that when he was unconscious, Diane could not even harm him nor even leave a mark with the Dragon Fang sword. Rody would not believe that this person's claws were more powerful than the Dragon Fang sword.

It was just a pity that he could not take the Dragon Fang sword with him to the Imperial Capital as he was too weak to hold it. When the black clothed vampire used his pair of claws to fight with the captain, the ordinary weapon used was unable to hurt the vampire. However, the Dragon Fang sword might be able to.

The vampire's claws grabbed Rody's arm, but he only managed to tear Rody's clothes. When he almost broke his five fingers, Rody had already clenched the fist of his left hand and severely punched the vampire.

The black clothed vampire was thrown back, flung into the sky. In the sky, he turned around to change direction, but he fell and crashed into a few big trees.

Rody showed a tragic smile. Suddenly, he opened his mouth, spat out a mouthful of blood and breathed heavily.

In the distance, the black shadow below the big tree trembled and slowly stood up.

“You... You bastard! That was painful!” The vampire wiped his mouth and then he jumped. “You actually made me spit out blood! Damn bastard! I will drink your blood dry! I will crush your body!”

After finishing what he had to say, he immediately rushed towards Rody.

Rody gave a long sigh and looked at his left hand. Even if his left hand had more strength, it would not be of much use against the monster in front of him. He could not gather his own fighting energy, and it looked like he was standing there, waiting to die...

Shit, this is all Andy's fault. I was fine. Why did I go and 'transform' the dragon?

Rody sighed and closed his eyes. He gave a wry smile and said to himself, “Nicole, looks like I cannot keep my promise...”

Chapter 140: Proceeding North to the Imperial Capital

The black-clothed vampire laughed as he closed in from afar. Rody suddenly heard a familiar voice. “Get out of my way!”

Rody felt a strong force fiercely knock him to one side. After that, he saw something white shoot out. Under the moonlight, it reflected a soft white light.

Just like that the black-clothed vampire flew smack into that white thing, and suddenly, he screamed. It seemed as if he was burned as he retreated. He had a large and bloody open wound on his body. His clothes were in tatters and a black smoke was coming out of his wounds. There was a trace of water on his body. However, the water stains were like fire to his body. Wherever he went, a light smoke would emerge. The vampire shrieked miserably as he rolled on the ground. His bloody flesh continued to burn until his white bones could be seen.

Rody was stunned for a moment and then he heard a familiar voice whisper, “Act quickly! I only took a little bit of holy water! Now is your chance!” Rody finally realized that the voice belonged to that girl from the Silvermoon Clan, Diane.

Rody felt a gust of wind. Although he could not see her, Rody knew that Diane had already started to rush towards the vampire.

Diane was still using her clan’s special stealth technique. Rody saw that the vampire was stabbed twice, and immediately, a lot of scars appeared. He was seriously injured and was unable to protect himself. Diane’s dagger attack left two deep wounds on his body.

The vampire gave a bizarre cry. He endured the pain and suddenly fled. In a very short while, he was already high up in the sky, as he flew away in panic.

Diane walked towards Rody and supported him. Her figure then

gradually appeared.

The surroundings had finally turned quiet. Rody looked at Allier and his captain, both lying on the ground. He then whispered. "Let's check their conditions first. And also... Dark... How is he?"

Diane glanced at Rody and her face revealed a complicated expression.

At that moment, Rody was seriously injured, and his men were also unable to fight. The fatty that had always stopped her was also not around. The troublesome Dark was also unconscious. If she wanted to kill the 'Mystic Dragon' possessed man, there would be no better chance than now. Even if she could not kill him, she could still bring him back to the mountains. Most likely he would be unable to resist. Even if his body was impenetrable to swords, the Elders of the clan might have another way.

However, that hesitation was just a passing thought. Diane gritted her teeth and walked to the captain of the bodyguards and Allier. She carefully checked their conditions and then went to check on Dark.

After a while, she frowned and said, "Duke, your subordinate is alright, but the owner of the inn is on the verge of dying... He was pierced by the claws... As for that guy, I cannot see any injuries."

Rody turned pale. With great effort, He struggled to Allier's side. He saw that the man's chest was badly mangled. He probably sustained the injury in the battle earlier. Allier was, by nature, a courageous person. He struggled to get up. At that moment, his face turned gray and his lips trembled. Obviously, Allier was going to die.

Rody felt guilty and he knelt down. He leaned over and gently held Allier's hand, but he could not say anything.

Allier suddenly opened his eyes and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, this old man had worked for the late Duke for the first half

of his life! It was a great glory to be under the banner of the Tulip Family. Today, to die for Your Excellency is the greatest honor granted to me by God!”

Rody gloomily whispered, “Do you have any wish? You can tell me. I will definitely fulfill your wish.”

Allier’s eyes reflected a certain brilliance. He forced a smile on his pained face and said, “Today, I die defending the Tulip Family and have no more desire. But I still have a son. I... I beg Your Excellency the Duke to allow him to stand under the banner of the Tulip Family.”

Rody nodded. “Your wish, I will make it come true.”

Suddenly, Allier's face glowed and he used all his strength to shout out, “Long live the Tulip Family!” After that, Allier drew his last breath.

Rody trembled and felt confused. He did not know whether to be sad or proud. He shook his head and whispered, “Tulip Family... How many people think that dying like this is glorious? Is this name really so glorious?”

He slowly stood up and whispered, “Who am I? Am I myself or am I the Duke of the Tulip Family? If I am myself, then why are these people dying for me? If I were the Duke of the Tulip Family, so... so, what I am considered as? What about Nicole... Nicole...” Thinking of that, Rody 's body suddenly shook and he felt a pain in his chest. He turned pale and spat out a mouthful of blood.

Diane looked indifferent but she also sighed in her heart.

Tulip Family... What kind of magic does this name have? Why do the people of the Empire worship him like a God? Why did the dying man shout his name? Love live the Tulip Family? Why is it not ‘Long live the Empire’ or ‘Long live the Emperor’? Could it be that the Tulip Family is more prominent than their Empire, their Emperor, and even their God?

Diane sighed and went to support Rody. The captain of the bodyguards also struggled to stand up. Although he was covered with injuries and his longsword was tattered, he still tried to stand up straight.

A burst of wind scattered the clouds in the sky and the fatty's figure gradually became clearer. As the fatty approached from afar, he finally saw, in the woods, several unstable people below him. He smiled and descended.

When Rody saw him, his expression changed and asked, "Sky, where have you been the whole night?"

Sky threw aside the vampire he caught. He clapped his hands and lazily said, "I just caught a small bat. This is him."

When Rody saw the vampire in black clothes, he became furious. He suddenly grabbed the sword the captain was holding and slashed at the vampire on the ground.

Sky reacted quickly. He pulled the vampire's leg and dragged him out of the way. Rody ended up striking the ground.

"Be patient! Be patient! Boy, you cannot kill this fellow! If he is dead, you would no longer be able to save your companions. I am telling you the truth. I already went back to the inn to take a look. Your subordinates were dead. This little bat that I caught is precious. If you want your subordinates to live again, it is better not to harm him."

After listening to what he said, Rody no longer brandished his sword. He looked at Sky with surprise and then asked, "Did you say... my soldiers can be brought back to life?"

Sky showed a strange smile, "I did not say 'brought back to life'. I only said saved."

Rody had a strange feeling when he saw Sky's smiling face.

Why do this guy and that old skeleton have such similar laughter?

The inn was a mess. The corridors were filled with traces of fighting and there was broken masonry on the ground. Blood was splashed on the ground and even the roof of the inn was ragged. That was obviously a post-war scene.

The dead Wolf Fang soldiers were found at various locations in the inn. Some of the corpses' eyes were open showing an angry expression, even when they were dead.

The inn was empty. Most of the guests and all the servants had already run away in disarray. There were also a few that were killed by those vampires during the chaos. After some sorting out, the bodies of the dozen Wolf Fang soldiers were neatly arranged in a row at the courtyard.

Rody stood in front of the loyal soldiers and coldly looked at them.

“Don’t you even feel a little bit sad?” Diane could not help but ask when she saw Rody’s cold expression.

Rody glanced at her. His eyes were cold like ice and he replied in an equally cold voice, “I... have already seen... too much death!”

After that, Rody looked at Sky and asked, “Is there no other way?”

Sky rolled his eyes and said, “Are you not satisfied? If they can become vampires, then you would have a dozen more powerful subordinates! Vampires are second only to dragons. They are much more powerful compared to the fragile humans! Tonight, you clearly witnessed this yourself. Your subordinates were all warriors. They were outstanding warriors in the human army. In the end, they were still easily killed by the vampires! These warriors were very strong. If they were to become vampires, their strength will be substantially increased...”

Rody interrupted him. “This is not what I meant! Don't tell me that I have to turn them into blood sucking monsters just because I

needed some powerful subordinates! I just want them to live! I do not wish to transform my companions into monsters!”

A sharp voice answered from the side, “We vampires are not monsters! We vampires are noble living creatures!”

Rody stared at him fiercely. The black-clothed vampire, that Sky had just woken up, was shocked but he still laughed and said, “I did not kill your subordinates. However, the way you all look at us vampires is ridiculous! We vampires, the humans and also the dragons are the higher organisms of this world. However, we are described as monsters because you humans fear us!”

Rody turned cold and replied, “Do you think I don’t know about you vampires? Ordinary civilians may not know but I definitely know!”

Rody paused and then he said in a low voice, “Seven hundred years ago, there was a war on the continent. That was the war between the people and the Kara clan. At that time, there were no vampires! After then, there was a human general named Count Dracula... He was originally a devout believer of God and fought against Kara’s tribe for humanity... In the war, he fought at the frontlines and earned a lot of merits. However, when he won the war, there were rumors everywhere. The rumors said that his army was defeated and he was killed in battle. His family and wife committed suicide when they heard that. When Count Dracula returned, he saw his dead wife. After that, he angrily asked the Gods why a devout believer like him received that kind of ending. In the end, he speared a God's idol at the Church. Blood started to flow all over. After that, he sided with the Devil and used fresh blood to sustain life. He became an immortal vampire.

Rody finished the story and looked at the vampire. He then asked, “Isn’t this so? If the records of the teachings of God is not wrong, then you, vampires are nothing but monsters that have been evolved from humans!”

“Hahaha...” Unexpectedly, the vampire did not have the slightest expression of fear. He looked at Rody in the eyes, smiled and said, “The teachings of Gods... again with the teachings of Gods. Those hypocritical fellows really dared to say anything to cover up the truth. Let me tell you. Ignorant human.” The vampire’s voice was not loud but was still filled with pride. “We, vampires are masters of this world just like you humans! However, we, like Kara’s clan, were subjugated by the despicable humans! We were the defeated race! We are not monsters! However, the beauty of our blood could never be obliterated!”

Rody was silent. He looked at Sky and then he looked at Diane.

That’s right. God’s teachings were filled with lies... The story of the Mystic Dragon, the extinction of Kara’s clan, the God and Devil war... Now, the vampires?

“Will they live again?” Rody asked in a low and weird voice.

“They will.”

“Do they need to drink blood to live?”

The vampire looked at Rody and replied, “No, drinking blood is just our hobby and a way for us to continue our race. Drinking blood for a living is just the distortion by you humans!”

Roddy nodded and looked at Sky. “How long can a blood-sucking vampire live?”

The vampire rolled his eyes as if he was very dissatisfied with the ‘blood-sucking’ words.

Sky shook his head and replied, “Only God knows. By the way, this person in front of you is over two hundred years old.”

Rody looked at the vampire again and said, “I do not want them to become blood-sucking monsters! I also do not want them to become monsters that people are afraid of! Do they really need to drink blood every day after they come back to life?”

The vampire shook his head and replied, “Unless you want them to become more powerful... Other than that, there is not much difference between us, vampires and you, humans... Our food is not much different as well.”

Sky suddenly laughed and added, “Other than garlic...”

Rody did not look at the vampire. He turned and walked into the room. He no longer came out.

Sky stared at the vampire and said, “Little bat, Why have you not started? You better not try anything funny in front of me...”

The vampire shook his head and sighed. “Sigh, I am a noble person and I actually get messed up by such a fellow... You asked to give this dozen of humans the first embrace. Did you think I was a Prince ranked vampire? I am only a two hundred years young man... although I am a genius among the vampires...”

As the vampire was still mumbling to himself, Sky stared at him. He immediately kept quiet.

At dawn, Rody stood outside the inn.

Rody had insisted on leaving for the Imperial Capital. However, the dozen new blood vampires had not completely degenerated into matured vampires. Sky had to retain the captive vampire. Other than the powerful fatty, nobody else would be able to defeat that vampire. Even though Rody really needed to have the help of a superhuman like Sky to follow him to the Imperial Capital he could not ignore the safety of his subordinates.

The captain of the bodyguards was seriously wounded and at that moment was still unable to move freely. The captain tried to oppose the Duke’s decision to continue his journey, but Rody had simply knocked him out.

Dark was pale. He had used the ‘blood destroying blood’ technique to fight recklessly against that vampire and at that moment was badly injured.

Rody looked at Sky and told him, “Fatty, I hope you did not lie to me. If these dozen men don't come back to life, I will come after you even though you had achieved 'Domain Force'!”

Sky pursed his lips and showed a supercilious expression.

Rody mounted on a horse and gently kicked it. He then whipped the horse and rode towards the North.

Sky then turned around and facing the empty space on his side, he shouted, “Little girl of the Kara clan, Aren't you going after him to watch the Mystic Dragon? Isn't that your mission?”

There was no reply.

Sky shook his head and said to himself, “Ah, It seemed like she has already gone... Shit. The Kara clan's stealth technique is very similar to the vampire's 'Blood Escape'. Even an old man, like me, cannot see through them. Young people these days...”

Sky shook his head vigorously and forcefully kicked the vampire with one foot. He then shouted ferociously, “Little bat, get to work!”

The sun started to rise as a horse rode quickly towards the North.

Rody looked gloomy.

“Nicole, wait for me. I am coming back to you!” Rody then thought of something and could not help but say in a low voice, “Even if he is the Emperor, I will fight with all my might and I will drag him to hell to meet the devil.”

Diane's voice came from behind, “Why send him to meet the devil?”

Rody's expression did not change. He knew that Diane would be following him and did not bother to look back. Although he could not see her, he could feel her following behind him.

“The devil? I actually ordered to create a dozen vampires! In the eyes of God's believers, I am already someone who worship the

devil.” A wry smile could be seen on Rody’s mouth.

If passersby were to see this scene, they would think that they were daydreaming. This is because they would be able to see a young blonde haired man riding a horse with a flirtatious woman with black hair standing behind him.

The woman’s black hair fluttered as she stood on the back of the horse as if it was a flat surface.

Chapter 141: One Becomes Two

The Imperial Capital was bustling as usual.

At the moment, Rody was slowly leading his horse. He was not inside the Imperial Capital yet. He was in a town on the outskirts of the Imperial Capital. The roads here were already much wider compared to the roads of the small towns in the South. After hundreds of years of usage, the limestone surface in the Imperial Capital was extremely smooth. There were a lot of pedestrians, and the commercial area was bustling.

Rody took a deep breath. He was more used to the smell of the air here compared to the South. He carefully walked forward. His blonde hair had already been dyed black with medicinal liquid. However, Rody kept his head low and watched the surroundings out of the corner of his eyes.

The magnificent city wall and a huge gate were in front of him. A team of armored soldiers with spears vigilantly watched the crowd.

Rody immediately lowered his head even more and walked through the front gate with his horse. Fortunately, the war in the Northwest was already over. Otherwise, the security at the gates would not be so lax.

Rody sighed in relief the moment he entered the city. However, before he could calm down, he suddenly felt someone slowly following behind him.

Rody immediately became wary. He had not yet figured out who was behind the assassination attempt on him at the inn.

The captured vampire also said it was ordered by the leader of the vampires.

However, Rody could not understand why he would be targeted by vampires. He presumed it may have been some disagreement

between one of the old Tulip Family members and the vampires in the past. This is something I plan to ask Nicole when I return. If Nicole does not know, Old Mark might know something.

He avoided the crowd and was carefully walking towards the Duke's mansion. Suddenly, a young boy walked in front of him and shouted, "Mister!"

Rody frowned and looked at the boy. The boy was dressed in worn out clothes, and his face was covered in mud. He presumed that the boy was a beggar in the streets of the Imperial Capital. Rody was afraid of being recognized and continued to walk without stopping. There were many people in the Imperial Capital that could recognize him. When he had set off to the Northwest as well as when he returned victoriously, almost everyone in the Imperial Capital came to watch the new Duke of the Tulip Family. If he was recognized here, everything would be over.

"Mister!" The boy behind sped up and stopped in front of Rody.

Rody sighed and whispered, "I don't have any change. Just take this." He took out a gold coin and threw it at the boy.

The boy took the coin. Although he was happily surprised, he still did not move out of the way. He then produced something and handed it to Rody.

"Mister, someone asked me to give this to you."

"Hm?" Rody froze for a moment. He had a strange feeling as he looked at the roll of paper in the boy's hands.

"What is this? Is this for me?"

The boy nodded his head. "One man asked me to run here and give this to you. He gave me a gold coin as payment! You also gave me a gold coin! God really blessed me, today!" The boy said excitedly.

Rody became vigilant and asked, "Who asked you to give this to me? Where is that person?"

“Right there!” The boy turned around and pointed at an alley, but there was nobody there.

The boy then showed a strange expression and said, “He was there just now.”

“What did that person look like?” Rody took the paper from him with one hand.

“I don’t know. He wore a cloak, and his head was covered. He looks like a foreigner.” After he finished, the boy ran away, laughing happily.

Feeling surprised, Rody walked into a small path with nobody around and unrolled the paper scroll. There was a simple message written with a pencil. The home has been surrounded. Do not go home!

The sentences were written in a hurry, and the handwriting was sloppy. After looking at the handwriting for a while, he felt that the handwriting was extremely familiar as if he had seen it somewhere before.

After thinking for a moment, he felt that something was not right. He had secretly returned to the Imperial Capital and had just arrived, but someone had already sent him a note. Obviously, that person had watched him enter the city. Maybe, at that moment, that person was staring at him.

Rody held the hilt of his sword and looked around. He was in a long alley with walls on both sides. Outside the alley was a lively street.

He took a deep breath and thought to himself. He still could not help but want to go back to the Duke’s mansion to take a look.

Only the ghosts knew who sent Rody that note. Rody wondered if it was from one of the vampires. Since the vampires wanted him dead, they would hope that he would not go home!

Rody shook his head. He was anxious about seeing Nicole as soon

as possible. His anxiety got more intense as he got closer to home. He could not endure waiting any longer.

Rody turned into two streets and saw that the mansion was getting closer. The moment he turned the corner, he would be able to see the front door of the Duke's mansion. Suddenly, a voice came from behind, "Mister!"

Rody looked back and saw a boy running towards him. This boy looked taller than the previous one. He panted as he ran over to Rody's side and took out a piece of paper. "A man asked me to give this to you."

Rody was shocked. The boy handed over the piece of paper, turned around and ran away.

"I know that you won't believe me. I will wait for you at Old Mark's house, tonight!"

Reading these words on the note, Rody immediately stopped.

Most people did know about Old Mark's house in the city. Even Nicole did not know about it. He had only been there once before the expedition to the Northwest. No matter who it is, since that person knows about this house, he is probably someone on my side. Most likely, this person is Old Mark himself.

But why didn't he just come out and meet me?

Rody thought to himself and no longer walked forward. He suppressed his urge to see Nicole, turned around and walked away.

Old Mark's house was in an alley in the South of the Imperial Capital. Earlier, Rody had passed through that area. Now, he had to go back. He took the paths that were devoid of people. Finally, Rody looked at the buildings on both his right and left and confirmed that he was at the right place. He then stood in front of a medium sized building.

He nervously knocked on the door.

There was no answer. He then knocked harder on the door. However, he did not expect that with the little bit of force, the door gently opened. The door was actually not locked.

Rody frowned and carefully led his horse inside. He looked around and felt that the place had not changed. The two courtyards were quiet but messy. There were many fallen leaves on the ground, and it looked like nobody had swept the place for a long time. The crooked stone table that was split into two when Old Mark showed Rody how to use the lightsaber was still there.

Rody felt something weird. He tied the horse to a tree and carefully walked towards the room.

The door of the room was not locked and opened once it was pushed. Unlike the courtyard, the room was neat and tidy. The wooden table was also spotless. Rody looked at the kettle on the table, picked it up and shook it.

There was water inside the kettle. This meant that someone was here.

Rody then sighed and gave a wry smile. "At least, Old Mark will not harm me..."

Rody was currently weaker than before. After traveling back and forth, he was already tired. His body felt weak, and he looked for a chair to sit down. Initially, Rody was worried but gradually he was overcome by exhaustion.

A voice suddenly came from beside him, "Are you tired? Rest for a while... I will tell you if someone comes."

Rody gave a wry smile and said, "You are still following me. I feel awkward not being able to see you because you are using stealth!"

Diane calmly replied, "My mission is to follow you. You are now possessed by the Mystic Dragon. I must watch over you."

Rody sighed and said, "So that you can kill me when you have the opportunity, right?"

Diane remained silent and did not reply.

Rody sighed and continued, “You will not kill me. All along the way, you had lots of opportunities to kill me, but you did not do so. Why are you lying to me?”

Diane slowly appeared behind him.

“That is because I am curious...” She slowly said, “I am curious as to what was so special about you, Duke of the Tulip Family, that so many people are willing to die for you! I am curious why so many people said that the glory of the Tulip Family’s banner was more important than their lives. Do you know? There was a man who fought desperately against the vampires. When he was in extreme danger, he did not think of how to escape, but instead, he regretted that he could not fulfill his agreement with you!”

Rody nodded and asked, “Is that it?”

Diane laughed, “Is there anything else? We, the Silvermoon Clan are pious and respect the True God Kara! However, you and the Tulip Family have won the loyalty of these people. Even the hunter that has been secretly following you here was the same! I thought that he was a very strange person. He is not the kind of pious person with beliefs. However, he was willing to give his life to protect yours.”

Rody gave a wry smile and said, “That is because you do not know what my agreement was with him.”

Diane did not reply but instead kept quiet.

Rody sighed. He felt tired and frustrated. He was now the equivalent of a useless person. When he was journeying to the Northwest, he was able to march a few days without resting. However, after he had absorbed the dragon's energy, he tired easily. The only thing he could rely on was the sword in his hands. However, he had also lost the ability to wield it. How was he supposed to fight the Emperor? How could he snatch back his

woman?

Perhaps, I should ask Andy when I reach home...

Rody's mind was confused as he thought of Nicole from time to time. Finally, Rody closed his eyes.

At night, Rody was awakened by a harsh voice. "Someone is coming!"

Rody opened his eyes and stood up. He heard footsteps coming from outside the room.

The footsteps were unusually brisk. It was as if that person knew that Rody was already in the room. The footsteps did not stop and went directly towards the room.

The door of the room was pushed open and a slender man walked in.

He was really just like what the boy on the street described. The man wore a big cloak that covered his head. The man's face was also hidden in the shadows of the cloak.

The man slowly walked in. He then calmly turned around and closed the door. After that, he looked at Rody and chuckled.

"Not bad, your current appearance really looks like a Duke!"

Rody frowned and asked in a low voice, "Who are you? Are you the one who gave me the notes?"

The man did not reply Rody and walked around Rody from a distance. He laughed and said, "Not bad. Looks like Nicole trained you very well. You look good. You have the spirit of a Duke. If it was not said, no one would be able to tell that you are an imposter!"

Rody's expression changed when he heard those words.

"Who are you? How do you know..." Rody was startled and asked, "Are you Old Mark's friend? Did he tell you? Why did he tell you this?"

The man laughed as if he was very happy and replied, “Ahh, this is not good. Still so impatient. This is really not good. As the Duke of the Tulip Family, you will experience a lot of important events, you must not be impatient... I guess that is your shortcoming. However, you look good. You look like a brave and fierce soldier... Why is your hair black? Did you dye it yourself? It is no wonder. You come back secretly, and you need to avoid being noticed by others.”

“Who the hell are you?” Rody stepped forward and said in a cold voice.

The man was startled for a moment, and then he continued to laugh. “You still can't tell who I am? My God...” He then paused and spoke to himself, “It is no wonder. He had only met me once. But that is not right. Does he not look in the mirror every day? Hmm? But he also only heard my voice once.”

After that, the man finally pulled down the cloak that was covering his head. He then smiled and laughed at Rody.

His golden hair was like the sunlight, and he had a pair of deep blue eyes like a lake. His handsome face was that of a girl's dream lover's.

Rody's eyes grew wide as he looked at the young man in front of him.

“It's you! Seth!” Rody roared loudly. He looked like he was about to rush towards Seth.

Seth's smile remained the same. Suddenly, his eyes moved and his smile turned strange. “The beautiful woman inside this room. Why have you not spoken? Are you not willing to let me have the honor of hearing your wonderful voice? Or perhaps you were too shocked by our earlier conversation?”

Seth paused for a moment. He then gracefully bowed and said, “I am the heir of the Tulip Family, Seth Rudolph, the Duke of the

Tulip Family. May I request this beautiful lady to give me her name?”

Chapter 142: Reborn for Your Sake

Rody found it hard to believe when he saw the real Duke of the Tulip Family in front of him. He immediately rushed forward and grabbed Seth's shoulders with both his hands. It was as if he was afraid that if he were slow, Seth would disappear again.

Diane's figure slowly appeared. She was originally standing behind the chair that was beside Rody as her slim figure slowly revealed itself. Seth did not care about Rody who was holding his shoulders. His eyes were focused on Diane with appreciation. He then smiled and said. "Oh, she really is a beautiful lady. My God, beautiful lady, why do you use that technique to cover up your exceptional appearance? Without your beautiful figure, this world would be cast into the shadows."

Diane's surprised expression could not be described with words. She did not hear a single word the man in front of her had just said. She just stared at him with her beautiful eyes. She then kept looking, to and fro, at Rody and Seth. The longer she looked, the paler her face turned and the more horrified her expression became.

"Can you let me go? Boy... I will not run." Seth laughed. "If I had wanted to run, I would not have come and met you."

Rody tried extremely hard to suppress his emotions. He really wanted to strangle this person, who looked identical to him, to death.

Finally, Rody came to his senses and let go of Seth. His eyes remained complex and he did not dare to look away from Seth.

"You! You two!" Diane's brain finally started to work again. She pointed at Rody and Seth with her finger and tightly covered her mouth with the other hand so that she could control herself from calling out. "You two..."

Seth sighed. “Yes...”

Diane asked, “Your face...”

Seth responded, “Yes...”

Diane exclaimed, “You look like...”

Seth nodded and replied, “Yes...”

Diane’s voice started to tremble. “Your identity...”

Seth only nodded his head and was too lazy to even speak.

Diane’s body shook and could not help but sat down on a chair. After some time, she struggled and asked, “What is going on with you two?”

Seth laughed and walked to Diane’s side. He glanced at her beautiful face and gave a smile, “I have already said it earlier. We are both Dukes. However, I did not like to be a Duke. He, on the other hand, was chosen by my sister to replace me as Duke. It is neither a simple nor a complicated matter.”

Diane then directed her next question to Rody. “Does that mean that you are an imposter?”

Before Rody could speak, Seth replied, “He cannot be considered a fake. In fact, the new Duke of the Tulip Family and all of the achievements were accomplished by him. He is more qualified to be a Duke compared to me... other than the fact that he is not really the offspring of our family, he can already be considered an excellent Duke. Isn’t that right, Your Excellency?”

Rody’s face turned cold and replied, “Stop talking nonsense! Since you are back, then you better be the Duke! I want to be myself!”

Seth’s smile faded and his expression turned serious. “Me, become the Duke? What a joke! You are the one who made Reuenthal retreat in the Northwest! You are also the one who quelled the rebellion at Westwood! If I were the one doing it, there

would no longer be a Duke of the Tulip Family. What do you think is the Duke of the Tulip Family? Is it just someone with the family's blood? You are wrong! Boy, what the Empire needs is the 'Duke of the Tulip Family', a hero! It is not important whether that hero is really the heir to the Tulip Family or whether that person is really Seth! However, the Empire needs a 'Tulip'! They need the Tulip Family's banner to lead them out of predicament! I cannot do this. The 'Tulip' that has aroused the people's confidence is you! You are the one who reignited the hearts of countless people! You are the one who helped the Empire to gain another spiritual leader!" Seth paused for a moment and his smile returned. "If I were to do it, I would destroy all of that in less than a month!"

Rody started to sweat and anxiously said, "But you are..."

Seth looked straight at Rody and replied, "I am the real successor of the Tulip Family? Idiotic boy! The Tulips are a part of the Empire! That banner belongs to this entire continent and not just our family! You are the one that raised that banner again! Naturally, it is your duty to carry its burden!"

Rody did not speak. He had to admit that Seth's words were extremely shocking. His every word hammered fiercely at his heart.

That is right! The Tulip Family's banner was already dead! Their spirit had already disappeared! Now the Empire once again worships the Tulip Family. The Tulip Family's banner is once again being raised in front of the powerful foreign enemies. This is all the result of my actions!

Rody thought of the people that had died for the glory of the Tulip Family during the battle in the Northwest and during the assassination attempt in the south. If he were to overturn everything, those loyal soldiers would have died for nothing.

Seth looked at Rody's face and saw cold sweat flowing out of Rody's head. He then slowly added, "Although you are not a real

Tulip, the Tulip Family has risen again because of you!”

The room was silent. Diane looked at both Rody and Seth’s face. Seth continued to look at Rody. Rody had a profound expression, as he kept looking at his own hands and toes.

Ignoring Rody who was in a daze, Seth looked back at Diane again and laughed. “Beautiful lady, may I ask who you are? Are you this boy’s lover? I had thought he was someone faithful, I didn't expect...He has quite good taste for women, but I am afraid my sister is going to teach him a bitter lesson.”

Diane looked back at him coldly and suddenly said, “You said that you are the real Duke of the Tulip Family? Let me ask you. How did you notice me when you came in? My stealth technique is different from the Empire’s technique. Most people would not be able to see me!”

Feeling proud of himself, Seth laughed and replied, “Beautiful lady, to tell you the truth, I could not see through your invisibility. I cannot see through any kind of stealth techniques at all. It does not matter if that technique was a special or ordinary kind. To me, they are all the same.”

Diane was surprised and could not help but say, “Then, how did you...”

Seth laughed even more proudly as he looked at Diane’s face. He moved his head nearer to Diane's face, then breathed in slowly and said. “That is because your body betrayed you. I am a person without ability, but I am very sensitive to a woman’s fragrance. The moment I walked in, I could already smell a refreshing fragrance.”

Diane was immediately stunned. Her incredible stealth technique could not be detected even by that extremely powerful fatty, Sky. However, it was noticed by the boy in front of her due to a ridiculous reason.

Diane watched as Seth's head came nearer and nearer her and she felt nervous. She then shrank back and gritted her teeth. "You are clever! Then, he... what's wrong with him?"

She saw Rody still standing at the same spot, frowning. Suddenly, he stretched out. His expression was gloomy, and he seemed indecisive as if he could not make a decision on something important.

Seth shook his head and sighed, "I certainly know what is wrong with him... Well, the moment I found out that my sister is marrying His Majesty, I already knew it was bad. Although I am not interested in being the Duke, I know that the Tulip Family's banner is important for the Empire. Sigh. I still have a kind and compassionate heart. Knowing that this idiot would desperately come back, I waited at the South gate every day. Sure enough, the idiot really came back. If I did not stop him, he would have already been caught in the trap."

Rody suddenly asked, "What trap?"

Seth asked strangely, "Oh? You have finally recovered your senses? Looks like your mind is slower than an ordinary person..."

Rody's face sank and he repeated, "What do you mean by a trap?"

Seth immediately stepped back. "Be patient! Are you trying to fight with me? Although I am no match for you, the one that will end up suffering is still you. Have you forgotten that?"

Rody immediately showed an awkward expression. He remembered the painful experience he had at the time when he was knocked out by someone who was much weaker than him.

"What do you mean by 'trap'?" Rody asked again, this time less imposingly. "Are they waiting there in order to catch me?"

Seth shook his head and explained, "That is also wrong. Although the Emperor could not wait for you to die, he still has not seen through your identity. Elder Sister had rejected His Majesty's

proposal, but the people of the Imperial Family refused to give up. The Emperor's two sisters and two uncles were determined to match both of them together. They were afraid that His Majesty would be foolish and marry Jojo." When Seth, the fearless playboy, mentioned Jojo, he had an unnatural expression on his face.

Seth then paused for a moment before continuing, "After Elder Sister refused to be married to the Emperor, the entrance of the Duke's Mansion was crowded with people. The Imperial Family also acted in an interesting manner. They were afraid that Elder Sister had a beloved. As a result, they called all the young nobles with status, talent and good looks, to the Imperial Palace to interrogate them. This was to find out who was Elder Sister's beloved. I heard that the contents of the interrogation were warnings for them to stay away from the Tulip Family's daughter. That is because she will be His Majesty's future wife. Haha haha."

"Then..." Diane could not help but ask. "Does your sister really have a beloved? Who is it?"

Seth gave a strange laugh and replied, "Of course, she has a beloved. That man is the Duke of the Tulip Family standing in front of us right now!"

"Ah!" Diane gasped. "But... but..."

Seth nodded and sighed, "But right now, he is just her 'little brother'. Haha."

Seth continued to laugh, while Diane's face had a strange expression. However, her strange expression also contained something else. She glanced at Rody with a complicated gaze.

Rody's face sank as he looked at Seth and asked, "Have you laughed enough?"

Seth's laughter gradually stopped, and he also sighed. "Actually, it is not funny. Ahh, this is truly a difficult matter."

Rody stepped forward and said, “It is not really difficult! As long as you become the Duke, I can be myself, and I will no longer be Nicole's 'little brother'! By that time, I will take Nicole and leave this place!”

Seth's expression sank, and he said, “Shut up!”

Seth's voice was loud and majestic. His face had completely darkened, and he gritted his teeth. “You are thinking of my sister! I can understand that! But once you are gone, what would happen to the banner of the Tulip Family? Who would fight against Reuenthal's armored cavalry? Who would defend the Empire from the Northern Roland Continent? The Military Minister of the Empire is like a malignant tumor! Who else would be able to cut off that tumor?”

His gaze became cold and he continued, “Who is going to soothe the souls of those brave warriors who had died for the Tulip Family?”

“But... That is originally your job!” Rody could not help but cried out.

“Me?” Seth sneered. “Do you think I can fight against Reuenthal's cavalry? If I were to go to the battlefield, I would get knocked off the horse or killed immediately during the first charge! Can I defeat the knights from the Roland Continent? Can I oppose the Military Minister? His nephew Milo is the Regiment Commander of the Northern Legion. He is in control of a strong military force. He himself is a powerful warrior! Can I defeat him? I am just a playboy! I am a free hermit! I like to use my brain instead of a sword! Do you not understand? The Empire is a militaristic country! The people here speak with their swords! If I were to become a Duke, do you think your men would accept me? Do you think they would be convinced by me? Do you think they would follow a commander who cannot enter the battlefield?”

Rody immediately turned silent.

His face was red as he stared at Seth, ferociously. “Then, what do you propose? Do you want me to see Nicole being stolen by that Abbas XI?”

Seth suddenly laughed again. He shrugged his shoulders and spread his arms. He deliberately sighed and laughed loudly, “Ahh, young people are always carried away by love...”

He showed a strange expression and whispered, “Well, I will help you get my sister. In exchange, you must help me to continue to be a Duke. How about it?”

“...” Rody looked at Seth, surprised.

Continue to be the Duke? That would make it impossible to get Nicole! If I want to get Nicole, then it is impossible to be the Duke!

The two actually contradict each other!

“You don’t have to look at me with that pair of bull's eyes.” Seth snapped in a bad mood. He then gave a strange laughter, “No, that’s not right. Your eyes are the same as mine right now. Wouldn’t calling your eyes bull's eyes the same as calling my own eyes bull's eyes? No, I should say that this is a pair of wonderful eyes. A pair of eyes that can capture the hearts of young girls!”

Seth then smiled back at Rody who was about to crumble and continued, “Anyway, you just need to believe me. Right now, you also don't have any other way. Also, you can rest assured. My sister is still alright, and nothing will happen to her! Don’t forget... she still has Old Mark with her!”

Rody sighed, “You also know about Old Mark? He...”

Seth laughed happily. “What do you think? How else would I know about the situation in the Imperial Palace? How would I tell you to come here? Who else would be the one that gives me the news? I am very busy and am too lazy to do all these things.”

Rody frowned. “You mean Old Mark knew where you were, during your disappearance? All this time...”

Seth nodded. "I had always been here in the Imperial Capital. I never left and had always been in contact with him." Seth smiled and continued, "That day, I simply said that I was going on a sea journey to the East. It was done deliberately because I knew that my sister would interrogate you. Haha, sure enough, that sentence made my sister send men to the sea, where they drifted for a few months. I am Seth. What makes you all think that you could catch me?"

Ignoring Rody's and Diane's expression, he looked at the sky outside the window and tapped his forehead. He then loudly exclaimed, "Ah! It's already so late... I still have an important matter to see to. Both of you wait here. I will see you all tomorrow."

He then ignored Rody's anxious expression and walked towards the door. Rody could not help but ask, "You... what business could you possibly have that is more important than the current situation?"

Seth gave a supercilious look and lightly replied, "Of course, it is important! I wasted several days to win this beauty! Tonight will be a wonderful night for us both!" Seth closed his eyes and looked infatuated. "Is there anything more important than this in this world?"

Before Rody could roar angrily, Seth was already on his way.

After a long time, looking at Rody's angry expression, Diane carefully sighed, "Seems like... this guy... really not suitable to be the Duke of the Tulip Family."

Rody suddenly sighed and dropped his angry expression. He then said, "You rest here. I am... I am going to see a friend."

"Friend?" Diane frowned. "You can still go out? Aren't you afraid that you would be noticed? I better follow..."

Rody showed a strange expression. "No... You better not... Do not

follow me...”

“Why?”

Rody’s expression turned even more strange as he replied, “Because... that place is not suitable for you. It is not suitable... for girls.” Rody’s face turned red towards the end.

Diane did not seem to understand and frowned. “This is not right. You are currently very weak. If something happened, you would not be able to deal with it on your own... You are...” She paused for a moment and then asked. “Where are you going? Why is it unsuitable for girls... Ah!”

She suddenly cried out. She was surprised and looked at Rody with an expression of anger and disbelief.

“You... you actually go to... that kind of place?” Diane’s eyes were wide open.

Rody lowered his head and did not dare to look into her eyes. He whispered, “Yes... I am going... to see a friend.” After that, he walked towards the door, not daring to look at Diane’s expression.

“I... I will be careful. You do not need to worry!” Before Rody finished speaking, he was already outside.

Diane saw Rody leave. She suddenly became extremely angry and stomped her feet. “Why should I worry about you! Shameless fellow!”

After pausing for a while, she cursed in annoyance. “Everyone related to this family is terrible people! That glib Seth is like that! The person, whom I thought of as an honest person, is also like that!”

In her anger, she kicked down the chair and then forcefully knocked over the kettle on the table.

Chapter 143: Battle for Imperial Power

The brothels in the Imperial Capital were still as busy as ever. Guests had started to gather there too. Various magnificently decorated carriages came and went in that area. Amidst the merriment were numerous luxurious and gaily dressed men and women...

Rody did not use the main entrance. Instead, he climbed over the wall and gently slid down a tree.

It was nighttime, and the courtyard was full of influential people who were there looking for pleasure. Rody could hear Madam Sophie laughing in the distance.

Rody had been to this place several times in the past. All those times, he had been receiving VIP treatment. However, he was now like a thief, climbing the walls. This made Rody feel a bit weird.

Rody could not help but laugh when he climbed the walls. He had always done it when he was still a student.

The couches on the first floor of the brothel, as usual, were arranged in a circle. In the middle of the circle were girls dancing a strange dance. They tried to seduce the men with every move they made. Ayyy! It is such a cold night and yet they are wearing such thin clothes.

He waited until there were very few people about, until the place was almost empty, before coming out from behind some trees along the walkway. He looked around to make sure that no one was paying attention to him before he quickly walked to the entrance and entered.

Rody then kept close to the walls and walked towards the staircase. Suddenly, he heard a loud laughter and a familiar voice cried out, "Madam Sophie, tonight, you will not find any excuse to stall me! Go and quickly prepare! I want only her tonight!"

The person spoke loudly and proudly. He and his two subordinates walked across the hall towards the stairs. Madam Sophie followed closely by his side and whispered something with a smile. Hearing that, the person finally showed a satisfied expression. He then waved and shouted, "Since that is the case, then hurry!" Showing an excited expression, he started to walk faster towards where Rody was.

Rody only took one look at them, and his heart started to groan.

That person was Bayan, the nephew of the Emperor and the son of Prince Baron!

Rody recalled his first visit to the brothel. At that time, he was accompanying Bayan and a few friends. It was also that time he fought against the bodyguard of the envoy of the Great Moon Kingdom...

Bayan would recognize me! Rody thought and quickly walked up the stairs. Bayan followed less than ten steps behind him. Rody's heart was beating very fast. Fortunately, he was able to remain calm. He only hoped that Bayan could not recognize him from the back.

Upon reaching upstairs, Rody immediately moved to one side and turned towards Myka's room. Fortunately, Bayan did not follow him and turned to the other side of the corridor.

Rody felt relieved. He looked around to make sure that there was nobody around and quickly walked to Myka's room.

He stood at the door and listened to the movements inside the room before he firmly pushed the door open.

The door was not locked. Rody knew that in such places, most of the rooms' doors were not locked. There was only one lamp in the room, and a silhouette could be seen standing by the window. The figure looked out of the window and seemed to be thinking of something.

Rody walked in and turned around to shut the door tightly. At the same time, Myka turned around and frowned coldly. “I have already said not to disturb... Ah!”

She exclaimed before showing a surprised expression and lowering her voice, “Is it you?”

Rody leaned against the door. He felt relieved and whispered, “Miss Myka, it's me.”

Myka quickly walked over. She still showed a surprised expression but she was smiling. “You have actually come back? Is it because you saw my letter?”

Rody nodded and whispered, “I...”

Suddenly, loud footsteps could be heard outside. Madam Sophie then called out, “Myka!”

Rody's expression changed immediately. He walked to Myka's side and whispered, “Don't say anything! I came back secretly!”

Myka's expression also changed and replied, “I understand.” She then pointed to the bottom of her bed. Rody understood her gesture. He immediately went to the side of her bed and crawled under it.

Myka took a deep breath and put on a calm expression. She then loudly asked, “What? I already said not to disturb me.”

Outside, Madam Sophie laughed ingratiatingly and said, “Myka, young Master Bayan has come to see you. Please go out and meet him.”

Myka's brow wrinkled up and coldly replied, “I already said that I will not meet him!”

Madam Sophie was about to say something, when Bayan suddenly laughed, “Why not?” As he spoke, he opened the door and walked strode in..

Myka's expression changed slightly. She involuntarily glanced at

her bedside. When she could not see Rody's figure, she sighed in relief. She then coldly looked at Bayan. "Young Master Bayan, how could you just walk into my room!"

Bayan smiled and was about to take another few steps forward, when Myka walked away and said, "Please get out."

Bayan looked back at Madam Sophie threateningly. Madam Sophie laughed hollowly and was forced to leave.

Myka frowned and spoke in a low voice, "Young Master Bayan, have you forgotten? I am Seth's woman. Yet you always come to me. Aren't you and Seth friends?"

Bayan became gloomy and stern. He then lightly said, "Myka, you always use Seth to stall me. Today, you will not be able to use Seth as an excuse! I do not care about that Duke of the Tulip Family." He then took a few steps forward and said in a low voice, "In the future, Seth would not be able to protect you."

Myka dodged and retreated a few steps back and she asked, "What do you mean? I am Seth's woman. You cannot touch me!"

Bayan became even more gloomy and gave a strange glare. "Seth, Seth... It is always Seth! I am the son of a Prince! I am His Majesty's nephew! I am from the Royal Family! How am I inferior to that bungling oaf?"

Myka was frightened. Her facial expression changed slightly and she whispered. "I..."

"I...What I?" Bayan shouted impatiently, "Stop talking about Seth! I have already asked Sophie. Seth only came to see you once before going to the South! Haha... It looks like that guy does not want you anymore! Why don't you give up?" Bayan walked a few steps forward and ruthlessly said, "Let me tell you! I, Bayan, want you! Don't think you can escape! In here, there is nobody that dares to go against my wishes! There isn't anyone right now, and there will not be anyone in the future!"

Rody was lying under the bed and could hear the voices outside. He became angrier as Bayan slowly cornered Myka. He felt like going out. Myka had already retreated close to the bed and noticed that the bed shook a little. She knew that Rody could no longer endure and loudly shouted, “Don’t!”

“Don’t?” Bayan froze for a moment and then he laughed, “Don’t what? Don’t forget your identity! I can get anything I want! How long do you think you can resist me?”

Bayan then revealed an evil smile and gazed furiously at Myka. “Not bad! I have always felt that Seth has a good taste for women. The women he chooses are the best! You are exceptionally good!” Bayan laughed. “Alright, since you like Seth's style, I can also do that. Isn’t it just to be more elegant? As I am from the royal family, I will not lose out to Seth in elegance. Why don’t you try...”

Myka became angry and gritted her teeth. “Young Master Bayan! You are a son of a Prince! You are a dignified member of the Imperial Family! Why are you bullying a girl here?”

Bayan frowned and shook his head. “Son of Prince? Hmph... Soon...” After that, Bayan realized that had slipped his tongue and coughed gently. He then spoke loudly, “Enough nonsense! Every time I come to look for you, you will find an excuse to turn me away! Do you really think I will not get angry? Have you forgotten your identity? You also better not test my patience!”

Bayan then showed an angry expression. He stretched out his arms and embraced Myka.

“Ah!” Myka exclaimed and turned away. At that time, Rody could no longer endure it from under the bed. His hands supported his body on the ground and he was about to get out.

“Bayan!” The door suddenly opened. A thin and tall young man walked towards Bayan and laughed. “You really are here!”

Bayan only hugged an empty space as Myka had moved out of the

way. Bayan then showed a resentful expression as he looked at the intruder and frowned. “Didi. Why are you here?”

Myka had turned pale but she calmly blocked the bed with her body. Rody was gritting his teeth, but he did not come out.

The person who entered was the Empire’s Finance Minister’s son, Didi. Noticing the unpleasant expression on Bayan face, he smiled and whispered, “I knew you were here. Come with me quickly... They... have finished the preparations.”

Bayan frowned. “So fast? Didn’t I tell them to come a bit later?”

Didi’s smile did not change, and he replied, “This? Go and ask them yourself. Anyway, they have arrived, but they could not find you. They then asked me to look for you. I guessed that you were probably here. Haha.”

Bayan sighed. He unwillingly looked back at Myka and hatefully said, “Forget it! I will let you off today. However, you better think carefully... Think of the consequences of defying me!”

Bayan waved and walked quickly out of the room.

Myka was gloomy and humiliated. She looked coldly at Didi and asked, “What are you still here?”

Unexpectedly, Didi suddenly laughed. His smile was calm and sincere.

After that, he sighed and said, “Miss Myka... I have saved you once today. However, there may not be such good luck next time.”

“What?” Myka was startled.

Didi waved his hand. “I need to go now. If I don’t follow him, he will be suspicious.”

Didi walked towards the door but he suddenly stopped and warned, “Myka, do not hope for Seth to protect you... Right now, Bayan is... Sigh. Anyway, even Seth would not be able to do anything. If... If you are still unwilling, I suggest you leave the

Imperial Capital!”

“What did you say?”

Didi hesitated for a moment and continued, “Just remember my words. If you cannot do it, then you better run! Bayan is hell-bent on getting you. The situation right now is more complicated... I cannot say much...” He then glanced at Myka and gave a wry smile. “No matter what, Seth is my friend. Now Seth is not in the Imperial Capital; I cannot watch his woman get bullied but... I can only help you this much. Sorry...”

After finishing and when Didi was about to close the door, Myka suddenly called out, “Wait!”

She then looked at Didi and said in a soft voice, “Thank you... You are a good person.”

Didi gave a wry as he said, “A good person... Hmph.”

Didi then walked out and closed the door.

Rody crawled out from under the bed. He looked at Myka and gritted his teeth. “Bayan... This bastard!”

Myka shook her head and thought to herself for a moment. She then coldly said, “Forget it. I don't blame him.”

Her voice was cold and sad as she continued, “What he said is right. What is my identity... How could I refuse him? I... I am just a...”

Rody pulled Myka's hand and shouted, “Nonsense! In my heart, you are my friend! You are a very good girl!”

Myka looked at her hand that was being pulled and smiled warmly. She then asked, “Really? You won't look down on me?”

Rody gritted his teeth, agitatedly. “Who dares bully you, I will slaughter him!”

Myka looked at Rody and finally burst into tears as she whispered, “Enough, you don't need to say anymore. You... you

don't be so impulsive. I have my own way out. Didi was right. If I cannot cope with Bayan, I should just leave this place!"

Rody wanted to say something but Myka asked first, "Why did you come back? Have you already received news that the Emperor wants to marry Nicole?"

Rody sighed and nodded. After thinking for a moment, Rody could not help but mumble. "I... I..."

Myka gave a smile and asked, "Is there anything that you still have difficulty saying here?"

Rody showed a complicated expression, thought for a moment and whispered, "I... I saw Seth. He is in the Imperial Capital, right now!"

Myka was shocked. Her body shook and her face was pale. Rody was shocked and quickly held her shoulder. "Myka... You..."

Myka took a deep breath. She looked at Rody and gritted her teeth. "I... I am fine!"

Rody asked softly, "Should I look for him and bring him to you? You..."

Myka shook her head. She then looked at Rody and asked, "Did you come here today... to tell me that Seth is in the Imperial Capital?"

Rody nodded and replied, "Yes, I just met him today. Looks like he had been in the Imperial Capital all this while. I know that you must certainly want to hear about him, so I came..." Rody suddenly noticed Myka's expression, and then he panicked and continued, "No... I also came to thank you! Thank you for giving me that letter... I..."

Myka nodded and smiled. "Thank you, you don't have to explain."

Rody shook his head and asked, "Do you want to see him?"

Myka showed a depressed but determined expression and replied, “No! I have said this before, I do not know Seth anymore! Now Myka is Myka, and Seth is Seth. I have nothing to do with him anymore. If he does not care about me, why should I still think about him? The day he disappeared, I had already forgotten him.”

Rody wanted to say something, but Myka shook her head and stopped him. She then looked gently at Rody and whispered, “You came back secretly? With your current identity, it is dangerous to come back here without the Emperor’s order. Despite the danger, you still risk your life to come and see me. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for thinking of me.”

Myka then paused for a moment before she continued, “As for the other thing, do not mention it again.”

Rody was confused. Although he could not understand Myka’s thoughts, he could not help but feel that something was strange. He then thought and said, “Then, you better leave the Imperial Capital! That Bayan will not let you off! I suggest you leave for Westwood tomorrow! That place is the Tulip Family’s fief. The last time I went there, I had already put in place a lot of the Tulip Family’s men. That place is now safe.”

“No!” Myka shook her head. “I will leave this place, but I do not want to have anything to do with the Tulip Family!”

Rody sighed and thought for a moment before saying, “Then... How about going to the South? Ride South for about six days, and you will arrive at an inn in Plumwood. Some of my friends are there. Go and look for them. Once I have settled my business in the Imperial Capital, I will meet you all there! When you are there, find a fatty named Sky. Tell him that you are my friend and ask him to protect you! As long as you are by his side, nobody would be able to harm you! But... That fatty is a good person, but he is a bit strange. He is usually a little crazy. You just need to be more careful.”

Myka hung her head low and replied with a red face, “I... I... will do as you say.”

When Rody heard this, he felt happy but he did not know why.

Before Rody could say any more, Myka broke free from his hands and took a deep breath. She then whispered with a flushed face, “Since you are here, I need to warn you... No matter what you are doing in the Imperial Capital, you need to be careful of Bayan!”

“Bayan?” Rody’s eyes showed an evil glint. “I will be watchful of him.”

Myka shook her head and frowned. “No! Don't! Don't provoke him because of me. Be careful of him... I am asking you to be careful of him. Do you know that because of the Emperor’s marriage, it is chaotic in the Imperial Capital?”

Myka said imposingly, “I suppose you know that the Emperor does not have a son. The position of Crown Prince is still empty... This is why some of the Imperial Family members are worried and asked him to marry your sister... but... you know... power struggle for the throne is always dangerous. The Emperor has no son, but his brother has one... Bayan is the only young man in the Royal Family. Right now, they seem to have a lot of different ideas. I will not say more, but I hope you understand!”

Chapter 144: Shadows of Vampires

“Are you saying that... Bayan wants to be the Crown Prince?” Rody frowned and asked in a soft voice, “This does not seem too possible. Although the Emperor has no son, he is not that old!”

Myka showed a profound expression and shook her head. She slowly said, “Rody, you are too simple minded. Since the Emperor has no son, then Bayan is the only suitable candidate. Very few people could resist the temptation of Imperial power. The Emperor does not have an offspring now. They might even make sure it stays that way in the future.”

Rody was shocked. “What do you mean?”

Myka looked at Rody, with a worried expression and softly said, “Rody, right now, you are in a high position. Your actions are the center of everybody’s attention. There are a lot of people that treat you with ulterior motives. You cannot face the world with such simple thinking.”

She sighed, and her face bore a frightened expression. “In the history of the Empire, whenever there was a struggle for the throne, there would be an enormous confusion and reign of terror. When Abbas the Great rose to the throne two hundred years ago, the entire palace was stained red with blood. People would do anything for the throne!”

“Do they want to attack the Emperor?”

Myka faintly replied, “In the past few years, Bayan had gathered the support of the nobles in the Imperial Capital. Think for a moment. If there were no conspiracies, why would he need to win the support of these young aristocrats? Even Didi, the son of the Finance Minister, is following by his side. There is also the Imperial Capital’s Garrison General’s son, Dardaniel. Have you already forgotten? They were originally Seth’s friend, but now they are Bayan’s supporters. He has won the support of the young

nobles, and through these young nobles, he has gained the support of the rest of their families. Rody, have you never thought of this?”

Rody sighed and gave a wry smile. “I am an impostor. Only God knows when I could stop pretending. The fights among all these people have nothing to do with me. I naturally never bothered thinking about these things.”

Myka shook her head and whispered, “Others may not know it, but I know. It was something Seth told me when he was drunk, a long time ago. I know that the Emperor does not like the Tulip Family. He had always thought that the influence of the Tulip Family in the Empire is too big and might overshadow the Royal Family. The Emperor does not know that you are an impostor and had deliberately sent you to the Northwest Region. His idea was to let the playboy get killed by Reuenthal. Even if he did not die, he would bring shame to the Tulip Family. However, you performed outstandingly in the Northwest. The result was that the Tulip Family’s prestige became even stronger. He then sent you to the South so that the rebellion of the mountain people would trap you there and keep the Tulip Family’s banner thousands of miles away, forever. His Majesty wants to remove the Tulip Family. However, have you ever thought why he suddenly changed his attitude and why he proposed to Miss Nicole?”

Rody frowned and said, “Is it not because the Imperial Family pressured him to do so? He originally wanted to marry Jojo and then later...”

Myka sighed and gently pulled Rody’s hand. She showed concern and asked, “Rody, do you think so?” She bit her lips and whispered, “This concerns the descendants of the Royal Family. Do you think this would be so simple? Would the Emperor just listen to those insignificant people as to whom he should marry? The Emperor’s sisters and uncles may be respected people, but they do not have any influence! Do you think His Majesty would listen to them and propose to Seth’s sister? If it was because of

pressure, why did the Emperor not give up after Nicole turned down the proposal? If he does not sincerely want to marry Nicole, why did he not take this chance to cancel the marriage proposal? Why has he not given up?”

Rody showed a thoughtful expression and said, “You mean... the Emperor has changed his attitude. He wants to win over the Tulip Family?”

Myka showed some doubts in her eyes and replied, “His attitude has certainly changed. However, I do not know the reason.” Myka suddenly laughed and showed a strange expression. “All the smart people of the Empire know that His Majesty is a real bungling oaf. Hmph. Abbas XI does not even have one tenth of Abbas the Great’s talent. If it were the other Emperors, they would be extremely happy about having the loyalty of a powerful subordinate like the Tulip Family defending the Empire. No matter what, they would try and provide the best treatment so that the Tulip Family would forever remain the pillars that support the Empire. However, I really do not know what Abbas XI is thinking. He is persistently trying to make things worse for himself.”

Rody was silent for a moment, and suddenly, he laughed. “Alright. Let’s stop talking about these things.” He laughed reluctantly. Although it was laughter, there was no pleasure in it.

Myka gently sighed. “I know... You are still thinking of Nicole. Are you worried about her? Are you more worried when I said that the Emperor sincerely wants to marry Nicole to win support through the Tulip Family?”

Rody looked into Myka’s deep gaze. For some reason, he felt an ache in his chest. He then slowly nodded his head.

Myka was startled for a while, and then she smiled. “It is unfortunate that you came here secretly. The last time you were here, I said I would sing you the new song that I have been practicing. However, it looks like this is not possible today.”

Rody also smiled and shook his head. “Don’t worry about the singing. Make sure you leave and go to that place tomorrow. There will be many more opportunities to listen to you sing.”

Myka turned red and whispered, “I know.”

Rody looked at Myka. He suddenly flushed and whispered, “Myka, on my way back, I felt anxious and angry. I felt dizzy as if I was a headless housefly. However, I have calmed down a lot after seeing you. Really... really thank you.”

After saying that, Rody glanced at Myka and then turned around to leave. Myka followed him to the door. She then opened the door to make sure that was nobody outside. After that, she let Rody out.

When Myka was once again alone in her room, she leaned on the door and showed a complicated expression. After that, she sighed and whispered, “Fool!”

Rody kept his head low as he quickly walked through the corridor. Other than two drunks, nobody else noticed him. However, just as he reached the stairs, he saw Madam Sophie looking up. Rody was shocked and immediately turned towards another corridor. Unexpectedly, there were two guards in front of a closed door at the end of the corridor. They were looking around and became wary when they saw someone approaching.

In front of Rody were the two guards, and behind him was Madam Sophie who had already started climbing the stairs. Rody gritted his teeth and immediately saw a door next to him. He desperately walked over and firmly pushed it open.

When the door opened, Rody immediately exclaimed in his heart. Lucky! Rody then entered the room and closed the door.

The guards at the end of the corridor saw the person entering another door and thought he was just another guest. They then stopped paying attention to that person. After that, they saw Madam Sophie arrive and immediately moved out of the way for

her to enter.

Rody smelled a fragrance the moment he walked into the room. There were no lights, and he could only vaguely see that this was a side hall. It was similar to the room he was in, where they used to greet important guests. Rody knew that there should be a window behind the room and immediately rushed towards the back. He then opened the window and climbed out of it.

Outside the building and below the window, there was a narrow ledge. Rody stood on the ledge and moved his body a little. Fortunately, it was night time, and he was in the backyard of the brothel. Nobody from inside would come here. Occasionally, there were one or two servants, but they would also not look up.

Rody saw an iron pipe about ten meters in front of him. It was probably used for ventilation. He immediately tried to move towards the pipe with the intention of sliding down it.

As Rody carefully moved past a few windows, he could hear laughter and music coming from the room. Rody did not dare breathe heavily as he got closer to the iron pipe.

His current health was far from before. He felt his whole body ache, and his breathing had gradually become more rapid. Rody sighed in the cold night. He seemed like a useless person. Not to mention his superb force in the past, the 'seed of power' given to him by Master Autumn and his fighting energy. He felt weak after making the slightest movement. He could not help but curse Andy.

Finally, he was relieved when he reached the iron pipe. He was about to slide down when he saw two servants walk by. Rody immediately turned stiff and did not dare to move. However, the two servants stopped and stood below Rody. They started joking with each other. It looked like they were goofing off.

Rody felt anxious. He suddenly heard a familiar voice.

["Your Excellency the Earl, goodbye!"](#)

It's Bayan!

Rody's mind went blank for a moment and then immediately recovered. The voice came from the closed window that he was leaning on.

Rody was startled. However, he pressed his ear to the window. From what he could hear, he guessed that there were a lot of people in there.

"Young Master Bayan, please send my regards to the Prince. Thank you for your hospitality today. I will return the favor some other day." The man laughed. Rody felt that his voice sounded familiar. He then realized it was the Empire's Finance Minister, Didi's father, Earl Merlow.

He realized that the reason Bayan got close to Didi naturally was to win the support of the Finance Minister. Obviously, it was not surprising for them to be here.

The room was noisy as Didi and Merlow chatted and laughed. They seemed to be saying goodbyes to one another.

After a while, the room slowly quieted down. Suddenly, Bayan said, "Send two people to follow them. Today, that scoundrel is acting dumb. I don't feel at ease with them."

"Hmph... These two fellows... If you are worried, I will get rid of both of them tonight. Killing two mere humans is no big deal. That young man seemed to be in good health. I wonder what his blood would taste like..." A man laughed after that.

Rody shook violently.

It's him! It's that vampire!

"Shut up!" Bayan suddenly sounded harsh. After that, Rody heard footsteps approach the window. Rody was shocked. He immediately grabbed the iron pipe with his left hand and squatted down.

As soon as Rody squatted down, the window was immediately pushed open. Bayan stood there and looked around before closing the window.

“Be careful when you speak! After all, this is a public place! There will trouble if someone hears what you just said!” Bayan voiced his dissatisfaction. He was displeased at the vampire for saying ‘mere human’. Bayan snorted coldly and continued, “Our relationship is, after all, a secret. When you are outside, do not speak like a ‘vampire’. Are you trying to attract the attention of the priests?”

The vampire was unhappy and rebutted, “Why are you worried about those religious trash?”

Bayan gave a weird tone and replied, “Trash? I asked you to get rid of Seth, but only a few of you managed to return. Let us see how Simao would punish you when he returns from the South.”

The vampire no longer spoke.

Bayan then realised that his words were too harsh and gently said, “My father was also disappointed that this was not well managed. However, it seemed like there was somebody powerful protecting Seth. The Tulip Family has been a powerful family for hundreds of years. Naturally, they would have connections. This was our miscalculation. We cannot blame you entirely. However, you must still be careful not to reveal your identity as a vampire. If it were known that our family and the vampires are cooperating with each other, we would all die together.

The vampire was still a little bit angry and said, “Hmph... You humans... should be honored for being allied to the noble vampires!”

Bayan smiled without minding the vampire’s words and lightly asked, “How is your injury? Is it serious? Simao would still need two days before he can return. This means that I can only rely on you in the Imperial Capital. The Emperor seemed to have been alerted of our actions. He is starting to gather the support of the

Tulip Family... and that court warrior beside him, Master Autumn, is not an easy opponent!”

The vampire grunted coldly but did not speak. Obviously, he was fearful of Master Autumn’s strength.

The more Rody heard, the more afraid he became.

Vampires?

Bayan sent the vampires to assassinate me.!

Rody then remembered Myka’s words. These people would do anything for the Imperial power!

Bayan and his father, Prince Baron— in order to compete for the Imperial power, they actually allied with the vampires. How come they are so daring?

The Empire was a kingdom that worshiped God. The whole Empire, regardless whether nobles or civilians, were all believers of God. Even the Emperor was schooled in the teachings of God.

The Pope was the spiritual leader of the Empire. Not only was he a high ranked person, at times, he was even superior to the Emperor. He also had two hundred thousand knights that had sworn allegiance to him.

After the God and Devil War, the Radiant continent and the Roland continent were divided into two groups. However, the situation in both continents was similar. The divine teachings, no matter which continent, were extremely noble. To ensure stability of the Imperial power, the people must be firmly connected with the teachings of God.

In fact, for centuries, the Emperor of the Radiant Empire had a close relationship with the church. Of course, it was also because the Empire had united the continent under a strong central rule. On the other hand, in the Roland continent, the numerous small kingdoms were very much in the shadow of the temple. Monarchy power was weak, but divine power was strong.

The strong central power protected the monarchy from the church. The influence the church had was undeniable for thousands of years. The religious authority and the Imperial power had existed side by side, neither imposing on the other. The Emperor symbolized the monarchy, and the Pope represented the divine right. That was the present unique situation of the Radiant Empire.

The close relationship of the Empire and the Church could be explained. The religion needed the Empire's strong administrative capabilities to promote their doctrine; the Empire, on the other hand, needed the religion to consolidate their rule.

However, because of the power struggle, Baran's whole family actually dared collude with the 'evil monsters' such as the vampires. The religious warriors had always been killing the vampires. Both sides had forged a deep hatred over hundreds of years. Whenever the vampires were caught, they would immediately be burned at a stake. Likewise, numerous priests who were bitten to death by the vampires.

Those who allied with the vampires were considered 'heathens' or 'evil'. These actions were considered the worst offense. If this secret was exposed, Bayan would immediately be regarded as a heretic and would antagonize the priests in the country.

Do they have to recklessly increase their power while competing for the throne?

Rody's heart raced crazily, making him miss out the subsequent conversation. When he finally calmed down, he was again able to catch the almost inaudible conversation.

The vampire then said, "Why do you even bother trying to kill that Duke? If you don't want His Majesty to marry the Duke's sister, then you can just kill the girl. She is in the Imperial Capital. Why do you need to go so far?"

Bayan gave a cold smile and replied, "Do you really think I do not

want to do that? However, this is the Imperial Capital! The Emperor has also noticed us and placed guards to monitor the Tulip Family's mansion! How could I act? Just charge right in? This is the Imperial Capital. Right now, we should stay away from public view. If it is like you said, the soldiers would not be able to stop you. However, after using such a big maneuver, it would become a coup d'état." Bayan replied agitatedly and seemed dissatisfied with the vampires. "Anyway, this is not the right time!"

"But..."

"But what?" Bayan was in a bad mood. "Kill, kill, kill! Do you vampires only know how to use your claws and teeth? By your argument, you might as well just go straight to the palace and kill the Emperor! Wouldn't that be simpler?"

"Bastard! You dare to insult me!" The vampire's voice became much louder, and the air turned cold.

Bayan was not afraid and coldly replied, "Don't forget, Simao has ordered you to listen to me when he is not around! Do you dare to go against Simao?"

The room became silent again. After a while, the vampire spoke softly, "Hmph, fine! However, if you were to insult me again, even if I cannot kill you now, the same cannot be guaranteed in the future!"

After finishing his words, the vampire left angrily.

Bayan was alone in the room. Rody heard Bayan lightly tap the table and mutter to himself, "That Seth really has a long life... However, if he does not die, how can we stop His Majesty from marrying Nicole? Sigh... Originally, if Seth had died, the situation would be disrupted. By then, it would not matter whether the Emperor married Miss Nicole or not. A Tulip Family without men is not threatening! Even if the Emperor were to marry Nicole then, it would be nothing remarkable. However, it seems that now there

is a problem. Luckily, the Emperor is an idiot. The Tulip Family could have been a strong ally, but he does not know how to win them over. His reasoning was that he needed to protect his dignity and desperately suppressed the Tulip Family. Now, it may be too late to win them over. Otherwise, Miss Nicole might not have rejected His Majesty's proposal."

He seemed to be thinking carefully and then suddenly whispered, "What do you think? What should we do now? Compared to that idiot, you seem to be a rare genius among the vampires."

Rody was surprised. There is still another person in the room?

Sure enough, there was a charming laughter. "Young Master Bayan, I do not know what to say about this. I suggest you go back and discuss it with your father. As for that fool, I will teach him a lesson. However, you better advise Simao properly when he comes back. Sigh. He is old, yet he is bent on finding trouble with the Pope. However, this is not the time to take revenge on the Pope. First, we have to wait for you to become the Emperor and gradually weaken the religion influences in the Empire. When the church loses its power, then it will be easy to kill a few of them!"

When Rody heard what was said, he almost exclaimed out loud.

Madam Sophie!

She is also a vampire?

In his surprise, he slipped a little and then there was a crash. Rody had stepped on something, and an old piece of the wall outside ended up crashing down.

The two servants below immediately became wary and looked up. In the dark, they saw Rody squatting near a window. One of them shouted, "Who is that up there?"

The other one reacted faster and shouted in a louder voice, "Thief!"

The two men shouted so loudly that Rody was immediately

shocked. He knew that he was in trouble.

Sure enough, someone shouted from inside the room. "Someone is there!" After that, the window crashed open and a pair of white hands stretched out to pull Rody's shirt.

Madam Sophie no longer had the seductive eyes of the manager of the brothel. At that moment, her eyes were blood red, similar to the eyes of those vampires that Rody had met.

Her smiling face had turned pale. When she opened her mouth, she revealed two sharp fangs. She roared as she looked at the person she had seized. In the dark, she could not see Rody's face clearly and shouted, "Who are you?"

Rody's reacted quickly. He brandished his left fist at Madam Sophie's face but could not land a hit. Although Madam Sophie managed to dodge the attack, Rody's clothes tore and he fell.

The two people below were still shouting and did not take precautions against the person above, who suddenly fell. Both of them were unable to react, and before they could move out of the way, Rody had crash landed on them.

The two men shouted miserably as the three of them rolled on the ground. Rody endured the pain and quickly got up. He then turned toward the entrance of the brothel and ran towards it.

The two servants continued to shout in pain on the ground. Fortunately, Rody had only fallen from the first floor. Otherwise, if he were to fall from a greater height and landed on them, they would have been seriously injured and would not even be able to shout.

There was a sharp whistle from above, as a black figure scuttled out of the window. The black shadow completely unfolded in the night and seemed to have a pair of black wings.

Before the two servants could see clearly, the black shadow had already scuttled to the ground.

The two of them were about to cry out in alarm but Madam Sophie had already grabbed them by their necks and snapped them.

“Grab that man! He must have heard our conversation!” Bayan shouted from the window.

Madam Sophie nodded and started chasing after Rody.

慢走, ‘walk slowly’ is a literal translation. It is mostly used as a polite expression when someone leaves like wishing someone to ‘drive safely’. In this case, it is something like ‘Take your time, don’t rush’ or just ‘goodbye’.

Chapter 145: Heroic Beautiful Woman

Rody felt as if his lungs were about to explode. He felt a piercing pain in his chest with every breath he took. His strength was getting weaker, but there was only one thought in his mind: RUN!

In fact, based on Rody's current physical condition, he should have long been exhausted from running so madly for his life. However, his fear still managed to drive him extremely far.

During the night, the courtyard of the brothel was extremely crowded. Many people came and went while the women tried to solicit their customers. The crowd cursed him as he bumped into them. However, Rody ignored them and continued to rush out of the brothel.

Rody was running wildly on the streets, while Madam Sophie was following closely behind him. As they were in the middle of the Imperial Capital, she had some restraint and only chased him secretly.

Just as Rody turned into a street, he immediately found himself in front of a carriage. He was unable to avoid it and was knocked by the carriage. That caused him to roll on the ground.

The carriage driver was shocked and immediately pulled the reins. A bunch of guards nearby also dismounted their horses and went over to Rody. One of them kicked Rody.

After that, a delicate voice spoke from inside the carriage, "What happened? Why did we stop? Didn't I order to leave the city immediately?"

Two guards turned around, and one of them respectfully answered, "Miss, the carriage has knocked a person."

The girl in the carriage was silent for a moment before she said, "We have knocked someone? Is it serious? Leave one person behind to deal with it. I am in a hurry. I need to get out of the city

tonight.”

The guards respectfully acknowledged, and then one of the guards bent down to turn over Rody. Rody had just been hit and was dizzy. He subconsciously struggled to sit up. The guard took a glimpse and exclaimed, “Ah!”

After that, the guard immediately used his body to block Rody’s face from the passersby. He helped Rody up and led him to the carriage door. He then said, “Miss, please come out and see... this person...”

Rody had regained consciousness at that moment. His first instinct was to break free. However, that guard leaned towards him and whispered in his ear, “Your Excellency the Duke, please keep quiet. You are in the middle of the streets!” After that, the guard signaled with his eyes to indicate that there was a crowd around them.

At that moment, a pair of white hands opened the door to reveal a charming face. The woman saw Rody being supported by the guard and cried out in fear, “Seth!”

Rody was also stupefied. He looked at the lovely face in the carriage. She was none other than Miss Jojo.

The guard whispered, “Miss, do not say anything here. This is not a convenient place to talk.”

The guard was extremely smart and winked at his subordinates. The subordinates then chased the crowd away from them. He then helped Rody into the carriage and stood at the door to block the sight from the crowd. He then whispered, “Miss, do not speak. The Duke seems to have sneaked back. As a general of the Empire, to return to the Imperial Capital without an order from His Majesty is an offense punishable by death.”

Rody was surprised and felt alarmed when he saw the guard in front of him. The guard nodded and said, “Your Excellency the

Duke, you may not recognize me. I am one of Commander Gordon's men. I followed you to the Northwest, and right now, I have been transferred as Miss Jojo's guard."

Although Rody still had some hesitation, he could see that the guard's respect and loyalty towards him were genuine. He then took a deep breath and whispered, "Someone is chasing me. Someone wants to kill me. Be careful."

The guard's expression changed. Both the guard and Jojo exclaimed, "Someone wants to kill you?"

Jojo showed an expression of concern while the guard subconsciously pulled out his sword.

At that moment, Rody has completely calmed down. He gritted his teeth and said, "No matter what, we must first leave this place! The person chasing me is very powerful. You all would not be able to hold out."

Jojo showed an expression of fear. Others may not have, but she had personally seen Rody's strength. She had already worshiped her sweetheart as a brave, invincible warrior. She whispered, "I..."

Rody shook his head and looked at Jojo who seemed confused. He did not expect to run into Jojo.

"Let's leave first! This is not the place to talk!"

The guard asked, "Miss, should we still leave the city? I think it is better to go home..."

Jojo stared and said, "We cannot go back!" She then paused and continued, "Let's go to the Duke's mansion!"

Rody shook his head this time. "We cannot go there! The Emperor has already sent men to guard there. It would be too obvious if we were to go there." Rody took a deep breath and continued, "Let's find somewhere else."

Jojo immediately revealed a pleasantly surprised expression and

suggested, “Then... I was going to leave the city. Why don't you follow me?”

Rody hurriedly replied, “No... It is too dangerous outside the city.”

Jojo said in disdain, “This is the Imperial Capital! I don't believe that there is anybody that dares to stop my carriage! Besides, I have brought along a lot of my bodyguards. Some of them are my family's master warriors, and some are warriors specially selected by Gordon. What is there to be afraid of?”

Ignoring Rody's refusal, Jojo simply gave an order and then closed the carriage door.

Rody was anxious and cold sweats started to flow down his face. He knew that a group of ordinary human warriors would be useless against a strong vampire, even if they outnumber the vampires. He quickly snapped, “Jojo, we cannot leave the city right now! The people chasing me are very powerful! However, they do not dare act openly in the Imperial Capital. If you were to leave the city late at night and enter a place with fewer people... they...”

Jojo showed a fearless expression and leaned over to Rody. She stroked Rody's face gently and said, “Seth, why did you suddenly come back? Why did you dye your hair? I miss you every day... Did you miss me?”

Cold sweat continued to flow from Rody's forehead. He tried to shrink back, but before he could speak, Jojo continued to ask, “You were knocked by the carriage earlier. Are you alright? Are you injured? Was it painful?”

As Jojo spoke, her eyes had turned red, and tears started to flow. She looked deeply at Rody with a heartbroken expression. “Why have you been avoiding me? Is it because of His Majesty? You know... for you, I have desperately rejected the courtship of the Emperor. The Emperor was also furious with my sister. Now, he

wants to marry your sister. I thought that nothing else would happen but... but, tonight, my sister had secretly sent someone to tell me that His Majesty still wants me... She told me to hurry and leave the city. I did not expect God would send you to my side! This is good. We can finally be together... I... I can see you tonight..."

Rody mumbled and gritted his teeth, "Jojo... Now is not the time for this. Please stop the carriage immediately. We cannot leave the city! I..."

Jojo looked sad as she replied, "You refused me again... I just want you to follow me and leave the Imperial Capital together. Why can't you at least grant me this? You always find excuses! Excuses! This is a safe place! Why do you not want to stay with me?"

Rody was worried about the vampire chasing him. However, he was also worried that Jojo would see through his disguise. He was sweating profusely.

However, the carriage moved quickly and soon exited the city through East Gate. It then turned into a road that headed towards the Northeast. The trees at the side of the road became more lush as they got further away from the Imperial Capital.

Rody sighed and said, "Alright. Don't be like this... Where are we going now?"

Jojo giggled and snuggled up to Rody's arms and said, "You are acting strange again. We are going to our family's mansion in the northern suburbs. That place is secluded, and nobody would be able to find us. We also have a lot of guards there, and it is extremely safe! You don't have to worry. Oh yes, you still have not told me why you secretly sneaked back to the Imperial Capital. Just now, that guard said that you secretly sneaked back to the Imperial Capital and risk death penalty for doing so. Is this true? Then, why did you return? And also, who wants to kill you?"

Rody turned pale and felt that he had headaches every time he

met Miss Jojo. She asked so many questions within such a short time. With all those complications, where was Rody supposed to start?

After thinking for a moment, Rody said, “The people after my life are Bayan’s subordinates...” He gritted his teeth and whispered, “Bayan wants to compete for the throne and have allied with vampires. I was discovered by accident... I...”

Jojo’s face had immediately turned white, and she screamed in fear. She held Rody’s arms tightly and stuck herself close to Rody’s chest. She remembered the stories of vampires and trembled in fear. “Vampires? You... How did you...? And Bayan... he...”

Rody gently pushed aside Jojo, looked at her eyes and gritted his teeth. “Now you know. This matter must be reported to His Majesty and the Pope, immediately. These people are now in pursuit to kill me. We are now in a dangerous situation... Sigh. What should we do?”

Jojo trembled and asked, “You... Where did you see Bayan... and the vampire?”

Rody subconsciously blurted out, “At the brothel! The manager there, Madam Sophie, is a high-ranked vampire!”

“What!” Jojo sat up straight the moment she heard the word ‘brothel’. Her original feeling of fear had disappeared and was replaced with an angry expression. She glared at Rody and shouted, “You actually went to the brothel?”

Before Rody could react, Jojo's face was already flushed with anger. She threw herself at Rody and started to scratch and bite him. She angrily shouted again, “You bastard! You! Seth, you came back to the Imperial Capital and went to that disgusting place instead of looking for me!”

Jojo was like an angry female leopard, and no longer looked of fearful or timid.

Rody was dumbfounded. He could only block Jojo's attacks and hurriedly called out, "Jojo! Jojo! You... Don't throw tantrum... I..." Finally, Rody could not help but pushed Jojo aside and shouted with a soft voice. "Stop throwing a tantrum!"

Jojo was pushed away and fell onto the opposite side of the carriage. Her anger disappeared and was replaced by a resentment. Her eyes were quickly filled with tears. "Seth! You have broken my heart! You did not look for me when you returned. Instead, you went to the brothel!"

Rody finally became angry and shouted, "Enough!"

Jojo was startled after being shouted at. Rody glanced at her and gritted his teeth. "Now is not the time to get angry! I had important things to do there! Now we are in danger! Please stop all the nonsense!"

Just as Jojo was about to speak, the carriage shook violently. Jojo could not help but fall into Rody's arms. The driver outside exclaimed. The carriage had stopped suddenly as if something had fallen onto the roof of the carriage.

Rody held Jojo with a solemn expression. He used his hand to cover Jojo's mouth. Jojo had also turned pale from fright and kept trembling.

A pounding sound could be heard on top of the carriage as if someone was knocking on a door. After that, a woman's voice could be heard. The voice sounded as if she was smiling. "The two lovers in there, have you finished your spat? Don't be intimate inside there anymore. Don't be shy. If there is anything to say, you can discuss it with Auntie Sophie."

Jojo was scared and subconsciously tried to push open the carriage door to run. Rody hugged her and prevented her from moving. They then heard the surprised curses of the guards outside as they drew their swords.

“Who are you!” “Get down from there!” “This... What is this?”

The shouting of the guards and the constant laughter of Sophie continued. She had already jumped off the roof of the carriage and started fighting with the guards. Clang! Clang! The sounds of the fight continued. The guards' brief muffled screams broke Sophie's laughter from time to time.

Chapter 146: Go To Hell!

There were more and more miserable screams coming from outside. After a while, the miserable screams gradually ended.

Time seemed to have stopped. A single second seemed like an eternity. Jojo trembled more and more violently as Rody tightly held her with a solemn expression.

Someone gently knocked the door of the carriage twice.

After that, Sophie spoke in a happy voice, “Well, how long do you want to remain in there? Auntie Sophie has no time to wait for you. Miss Jojo, Young Master Seth, please come out.”

Rody turned pale. He then looked at the frightened Jojo in his arms and sighed. He gently held her with one hand and opened the door of the carriage with the other.

Under the night, the monster stood not far from the door of the carriage.

The monster was about two meters tall and had a pair of pointed ears. It had a green face with a sharp chin. Her pair of long arms was full of black hair which was so long that it could reach her knee. Behind her tall body was a pair of huge wings, and her big hands were bloody. That monster was looking at Rody and Jojo in the carriage.

She looked at them with mocking face. Suddenly, she put her finger into her mouth and slowly sucked it. After that, she stretched out her long tongue and licked her mouth.

The monster gave a strange laugh. “I have not tasted human blood for a long time... This is an unforgettable taste.”

The sharp and delicate voice belonged to Madam Sophie. Rody did not expect that she would look so terrifying after she had transformed into a real vampire.

Rody was still holding Jojo. Before he could get off the carriage, Sophie laughed and raised a fireball from one of her hands, then lobbed it at the carriage.

Rody immediately grabbed Jojo and jumped out of the carriage. He then rolled on the ground, tightly holding on to Jojo. Rody then heard an explosion behind him. The carriage was destroyed.

The horse that was harnessed to the carriage was dead. It looked like its head had been twisted at some point in time.

The two of them were covered in dust. A piece of flesh on Jojo's arm had been torn off, and she was in extreme pain. Tears started to flow out, and she continued to hold onto Rody. She trembled even more violently, and her teeth continued to chatter.

Bodies littered the floor outside the carriage. The seven or eight guards that Jojo brought were lying on the ground motionless. They were obviously dead. The floor was covered with blood, and some of the guards had a bloody hole in their body as if their hearts had been dug out.

Rody took a deep breath and struggled to stand up. "Sophie... Madam Sophie, you have won. Come and kill me!"

The vampire gave a strange laugh and said, "Today seems to be my lucky day. That idiot had wasted the lives of so many vampires, yet he could not kill the Duke of the Tulip Family. However, I have caught the Duke! Just now, I could not recognize you because I could not see your face. However, I heard your conversation... Sigh. Don't you know that vampires have better hearing than humans?"

She stretched out a bloody claw and slowly walked towards Rody.

She then laughed and said, "Seth, all this while, I have been surprised. Initially, you were nothing but a playboy. I did not expect you to become so powerful within a short period of time... I thought it was strange since that time I saw you defeat the warrior

from the Great Moon Kingdom in the brothel. Could it be that the Tulip Family is really so magical? Come on... Show me how powerful you are. Show me the power of the human world's outstanding Tulip Family!"

She suddenly swayed her body and instantly appeared in front of Rody. Out of desperation, Rody forcefully pushed Jojo away. However, his opponent had already swung her claw at him, and he could not dodge in time. In fact, with his current condition, dodging was out of the question.

Before Rody could even groan, his body was already flung several meters away. He crashed into the ground.

"So, you are only at this level?" The vampire spoke in a soft voice, "This is strange... You seem weaker than these few guards. How come you were able to use fighting energy that day?"

Rody struggled to sit up and sighed, "Consider yourself lucky... If it were two months ago, I would have already cut you up into several pieces!"

Rody was a determined person. Although he despaired, he did not show his emotion on his face. However, he still looked helpless as he said, "If it was not because of my encounters in the South, do you think your claw would be enough to kill me?"

"Hahaha... Are you saying that you are injured and cannot fight?" Sophie burst into laughter. "You are an arrogant human. Do you think you can defeat me if you are not injured? You have underestimated us! I am a high ranked vampire! Even your Grade 3 or even Grade 4 human warriors would not be a match for me! You are only someone who had just comprehended fighting energy! How dare you speak like this!"

Rody shook his head and grunted in disagreement.

In fact, Rody had good reason to disagree. When he went to the Northwest, he was severely injured. The Black Veil Saint strived

hard to heal him with the greatest sorcery skill she had — ‘Reshape Origin’ — losing some of her powers in the process.

After that, Rody’s body became even more powerful than ever. His skills had made a breakthrough to new levels, breaking past his old limits. He may have seemed extremely weak at the mountains but that was because his opponent was either Wuya or some magical beasts. Wuya was so strong that he had already reached the level of demigods. Even that “Domain Force” Sky was not sure he could beat Wuya. Rody, of course, was no match for such a strong opponent. However, if he was graded according to the level of an ordinary human, Rody had already surpassed a Grade 5 swordsman. With a little bit more practice, he would soon reach the rank of a Grade 6 swordsman. Even the strongest ‘Sacred Swordsman’, Master Autumn, was only a Grade 7 swordsman. A Grade 7 swordsman was already at the peak amongst the human warriors. After Rody had gone through all sorts of miraculous turn of events, his strength soared until it was close to a Grade 6 swordsman. Becoming a Grade 7 swordsman was just a matter of time.

If Rody had not converted that dragon, he believed that he might stand a chance against this vampire tonight.

Rody gave a wry smile. “Tonight, I have nothing left to say but... Madam Sophie... Can you let Miss Jojo go? She...”

“Haha...” The vampire sneered. “You are really stupid! She has already seen my appearance tonight. Do you think I will let her live?”

Rody felt his heart ache and glanced towards Jojo. His voice was filled with guilt as he said, “Jojo... I am sorry... Because of me...”

“Don’t!” The frightened Jojo suddenly burst out screaming. She somehow gathered her courage and struggled to get up before running in front of Rody. Jojo held on to Rody and straightened her chest to block Rody from the vampire. She then looked

unwaveringly at the vampire and said in a hoarse voice, “You... I beg you... Do not kill Seth...I beg you... I will give you money. I will give you a lot of money! Ten thousand gold coins! One hundred thousand gold coins! One million gold coins! I will give you whatever you want! I will give you my life! You can kill me! But I beg you, please do not kill Seth!” Jojo’s face was pale, and her voice was hoarse. She tightly held on to Rody. Her pretty face was full of tears.

“How touching...” The vampire spoke softly, “Why do you humans have all of these stupid and useless emotions? In this case, show me an even more touching scene.”

Sophie extended her huge claws. The sharp fingers stretched out, and in a flash, they were right in front of Jojo. Instantly, those fingers fiercely pierced Jojo in the chest. Before Rody could react, Jojo had already groaned. Her white dress had been stained red with blood.

There was a faint sound and Sophie’s claws emitted a black gas. Jojo screamed as her body flew away. Rody, who was held on by Jojo, also flew several meters away. Both of them landed fiercely on the ground, hugging each other.

Jojo’s pretty face was full of blood and dirt. Her chest had a hole with blood gushing out of it. Her face was devoid of color while her dress was red with blood.

Rody was at a loss as he looked at Jojo. He was stupefied and shocked to see the bloody body in his arms.

Rody suddenly roared as if he was in pain. He held Jojo’s shoulder with one hand and shouted, “Jojo!”

Jojo’s body twitched and her lips trembled. She suddenly spoke in a soft voice, “Seth... I... am I going to die?” Rody felt something flowing out of his own eyes. He could feel the twitching of Jojo’s body getting weaker and her body turning colder.

“Jojo... Jojo...” Rody had also lost his voice.

“Seth... It hurts...” Jojo’s face was full of tears and was distorted in pain. Her voice sounded weaker and weaker, “It really... really hurts... Why does it hurt...so much... I am afraid of pain...”

“Jojo...” Rody tasted something salty as his tears flowed into his mouth.

Jojo then forced a smile and said, “Seth... You... Called me Jojo... Do you know...recently you have been calling...calling me, Miss Jojo. I don’t like... you... calling me Miss Jojo... I do not like... I don't like to hear you to call me... Miss... You are my Seth... I am your Jojo...” She took a deep breath and showed a radiant expression. “Seth, I am going to die... I am really going to die...I can sense it... I... I am not afraid, at all... We are going to die tonight... You...After we die... You... Will accompany me...am I right?”

“Yes! Yes!” Rody felt his body also trembled as he desperately nodded. He looked at the beautiful and lively woman covered in blood in his arms. Her large seductive eyes started to gradually lose their luster, and Rody felt his heart gradually being torn apart.

He did not love Jojo.

He also knew that the person Jojo loved was not him, but Seth. However, as he faced Jojo who was dying for him, Rody was willing to do anything to exchange for the girl’s life.

Anything for her life!

Jojo’s eyes had become lax, and she could no longer utter anything clearly. She gently opened her mouth but her throat did not produce any sound. With tears in his eyes, Rody placed his ear next to her mouth and only heard her repeating...

“You are my Seth, I am your Jojo.”

Her soft body gently twitched one final time before it stopped moving. Her rapid breathing also slowed down before finally

turning quiet.

Rody suddenly looked up and roared loudly. In the dark night, the roar was like from an angry and injured beast.

“How touching!” The vampire clapped her hands from behind Rody. Her green and fanged face revealed a terrifying smile. “Truly touching... How many years has it been since I last saw a scene that was this touching? However, you do not have to be so sad. I will let both of you die together. I will...”

Sophie suddenly stopped talking.

She saw Rody slowly let go of Jojo. Although he was still trembling, he had already stood up.

As Rody listened to Sophie's sharp laughter which was like that of the night owl, he slowly raised his hands. His hands were full of blood.

This blood is Jojo's blood... Jojo's tears mixed with her blood...

How pitiful... Truly pitiful! Pitiful Jojo... Pitiful me...Damn! This damn world!

For a moment, Rody felt rays of light - like needles piercing through his brain. Something that was extremely hard broke within the depths of his mind.

It seemed that the shackles of an ancient abyss— the chains that had fettered his very soul— had suddenly ruptured!

Rody's eyes became blank. There was no trace of sadness or anger. Although he stood there, he no longer showed any anger or other emotions.

After that, Rody's body started to tremble violently.

It was a kind of unrestrained trembling. His trembling became more and more vigorous, and his face also became more and more distorted.

“Hahahaha...” Rody suddenly burst into a kind of neurotic wild

laughter. “Good! Bleed! Bleed! Look! There is so much blood! How pitiful! This world is really damned! Damned! Go to hell! Hahaha... Everyone, go to hell!” His eyes then turned and rested on Sophie, not far from him. He then fiercely shouted, “Did you not hear me? I said, go to hell!”

Rody then looked at the vampire with a gloomy expression as he slowly walked towards her.

Crack...

With every step Rody took, the ground below him broke into fine cracks. The surrounding earth seemed to tremble as if it was crying sorrowfully.

A mass of dazzling golden flame then burst out from Rody's body. The golden flame rose two meters high and shrouded Rody's body in the middle. His hair danced from within the flames and his eyes had a murderous glint.

Sophie was surprised when she saw Rody's sudden change. Her instincts as a higher organism made her feel a sense of fear. It was a cold fear that came from the depths of her soul.

It seemed like she had made a big mistake. It seemed like she had...she had released a demon!

Sophie turned stiff. Her arrogant expression had disappeared and was replaced with fear. Her instinctive fear made her slowly step back as she confronted the purposeful advance of Rody.

Rody suddenly stopped, and his face contorted in pain. After that, his whole body started to tremble, and the golden flame around his body started to vibrate violently...

It was as if the golden flame was unstable. It swayed violently as if the flame was being blown by the wind. Rody sweated and blue veins appeared on his forehead. His face distorted hideously. Suddenly, he looked up to the stars in the sky and shouted, “Are you still thinking of restricting me? No way!”

Boom!

Even though there was no explosion, Sophie heard a loud noise.

After that, the scene in front made her mouth drop open.

The golden flame covering Rody's body grew violent again and rose even higher than two meters. It looked like a huge fireball in the night sky.

Immediately, the huge fireball started to change under the dark clouds.

Not knowing since when, the original golden flame had started to emit a trace of black color. After that, the black color gradually diffused and swallowed the surrounding golden flame. The original golden flame then turned black. It was black like the black hole in the night sky and black like the abyss of hell.

Finally, Rody's golden flame was entirely swallowed by the black flame. His whole body was then covered by the black flames. The flames were not obvious but it seemed to have a kind of incomparable foreboding manner.

Sophie felt like her whole body was covered in cold sweat. That was an instinctive reaction... It was the kind of reflex action of a prey meeting a predator.

“No... Not possible!” Sophie screamed, “He... He is nothing but a human!”

Rody closed his eyes. The painful contortions in his face had subsided. It was as if the black flames were extremely comfortable. His clothes were gradually torn to pieces as the fragments of the clothes flew away, revealing his bare arms and robust chest.

Surprisingly, the dragon pattern on his left arm had completely disappeared.

Instead, a pattern appeared on Rody's chest.

That black Mystic Dragon that was once cursed by the Gods, the

demons, the Mythological Animals— it's flaming orbs, its soaring wings — were imprinted onto Rody's chest.

Rody opened his mouth and let out a low moan that did not seem human. When Sophie heard this sound, she felt as if her face was just kicked by someone.

This sound! Damn! This sound!

This is definitely not a human voice! Humans cannot make this kind of sound! This is..."

Suddenly, Rody chanted as he gently stretched out one of his hands and pressed it onto his face. There was a brilliant light, and soon after that, it seemed like something was taken off from his face.

In his hands was a vivid mask that seemed to flash with a silver light.

His original long golden hair had turned blue in color. His handsome face had also changed in shape and was filled with killing intent. Half of his face had white skin while the other half had black skin.

After that, the black skin on one-half of the face gradually disappeared, and his whole face started to harmonize.

Rody had already opened his eyes. The normal deep blue eyes had turned brown. He looked at Sophie emotionlessly and calmly said, "What did I say earlier? Oh right... I said... go to hell."

He looked at the world indifferently, as if he could turn the world into dust with a snap of his fingers!

Chapter 147: Blood of Gods

In the stables of the Tulip Family's mansion, Old Mark was slowly putting away the heavy saddles in a corner. He then shook his head and took out a bottle of wine. He took a big gulp and sighed in satisfaction. He looked at the sky outside and muttered, "How come the sky is so dark at this hour? Hm, I will meet that boy Rody tomorrow. He is probably feeling extremely anxious right now."

Suddenly, his smile disappeared. His lazy expression had turned pale as he threw away the bottle of wine. He rushed out of the stable and faced the east with his eyes closed.

Old Mark's forehead was soaked in cold sweat. "This... This aura..."

Inside the Imperial Palace, Master Autumn slowly sat on a wooden bench. In front of him was his long and narrow sword. The dazzling sword reflected Master Autumn's icy cold expression. Master Autumn's white hair hung across his shoulders, and he looked as calm as a rock.

Similarly, he opened his eyes and gave a strange look.

"This aura..."

The Church's Religious Center represented the apex of the Church's powers and was also the heart of the Church's domain. But the building itself was simple and crude.

It was a beautiful building with a spacious hall without any decorations. In front of the hall was a tall statue. The statue of God was cold and majestic as if to highlight the fact that they were the spokesmen for God. Sitting in front of the statue was the Radiant Empire's religious leader, the Pope. He looked equally dignified and aloof.

He was wearing a simple and spotless white robe. However, he

projected a holy and dignified manner. He opened his eyes and looked at the four religious elders beside him. After that, he slowly asked, “Can you all feel it?”

“Yes. Pope... We can feel it as well. It feels like... a dragon.”

The Pope, Corsica VI, gave a smile, but his smile felt oppressive. He then slowly said, “Dragons usually live on the Northern Continent. How did one appear inside the Radiant Continent? On top of that, how did it appear in the Imperial Capital?”

The four elders remained silent.

Corsica VI shook his head lightly and said, “Elder Roma. Please go outside the city and see what is happening.”

The black robed elder sitting furthest to the right stood up and bowed to the Pope. He then said in a soft voice, “This one abides by Your Majesty’s instructions in the name of the Almighty.”

Elder Roma placed both hands at his chest. He then closed his eyes and was covered in light. After that, he had completely disappeared.

Corsica VI sighed. He slowly stood up and looked at the statue of God. He then muttered, “Is that really a dragon?”

Sophie continued to step back. She started to feel even more scared from the imposing aura of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

“You... Your face?”

Rody looked indifferently at the mask in his hands and then glanced at Sophie. “Are you talking about my face?”

Rody stretched out the other hand and clenched his fist. Sophie suddenly screamed as her body flew towards Rody. Rody then gripped her neck tightly and lifted her body.

The vampire was two meters tall. However, she was being lifted by the shorter and smaller sized Rody. As Rody held her neck, Sophie’s body turned stiff and trembled. However, she was unable

to use her strength while the other party was gripping her neck.

Rody held Sophie with one hand without bothering to look at her. His eyes focused on the mask in his other hand. He looked at a loss and had a strange expression.

After a long time, Rody showed a trace of emotion.

He slowly said, “I remember. I am me ... I am Rody!”

Rody’s cold face then revealed a calm smile. The silver mask in his hand disappeared. Finally, Rody lifted his face to look at the vampire in his grip. Sophie was unable to breathe and had almost fainted. Her pair of claws felt powerless as her feet flailed about softly.

“Tell me... Can you resurrect her? I know those that were killed by your clan can be reborn in some other way.” Rody spoke calmly and indifferently. It was as if he was just making a simple request.

“I... I...” Sophie trembled but was unable to speak.

Rody laughed coldly. But his laughter seemed to have an evil tone to it.

Sophie felt the grip on her neck loosen, and she was finally able to breathe. She immediately said, “She... she did not die from me sucking her blood. I... We, vampires, can only resurrect those that we have killed that way. She... is not...” Her reply tumbled out due to the overwhelming fear.

Rody nodded slowly and lightly replied. “In other words, you are unable to resurrect her. Is that right? Also, she could not even be resurrected as a vampire?”

Sophie felt the grip on the neck started to tighten again, and she immediately shouted in fear, “No, no, no... There are other ways. Unless... unless ... unless...”

“Unless what?” Rody laughed indifferently.

“Unless... the blood of the Gods is used. God’s blood can resurrect

thousands of lives... She can be resurrected with God's blood."

Rody nodded his head and closed his eyes. After thinking for a while, he laughed and said, "So that's the way. God's blood will do it. Is that correct?"

"Yes! Yes!" Sophie shouted in desperation.

"Very good." Rody sighed. "That means you are no longer needed."

He gripped Sophie's neck tightly again. The vampire's neck started to crack loudly as she gave a blood-curdling scream.

Rody smiled like a cold-blooded butcher. His other hand knocked on his head, and he said, "I do not know what just happened... but I feel like my head is giving me strange thoughts... I also seem to come from a strange place..."

His voice was terribly calm as he continued. "That place... It seems to be called... hell."

Rody then laughed softly. His eyes changed color and said, "Do you know what is in hell? Let me tell you. It is fire! It is Hell Fire!"

Having said that, Rody grabbed Sophie's neck and started to emit a steady flame from his hand. The fire was completely black. It spread from Rody's hand and gradually burned the vampire.

Amidst the sizzling sound of burning tissues, Sophie screamed tragically. She screamed as if her soul was also burning. It was the kind of pain that destroyed the soul.

As Sophie screamed, Rody was laughing. He laughed so loud that his body trembled involuntarily. The vampire in his hand started to melt from the black flames and soon burned to ashes.

Finally, the black dust in his hands dispersed. Rody slowly lowered his hands as he looked at the ashes floating in mid-air. His expression finally began to calm down.

The black flames surrounding his body vanished, and everything

returned to normal. Rody then walked to Jojo's side. He knelt on one knee and stroked her face. He then tidied up her beautiful hair.

Jojo's eyes were finally closed. Her face was extremely calm as if it was satisfied and at peace. The pitiful girl did not know that she had sacrificed her life for someone she did not love. She died thinking that she would die with her beloved.

Tears fell from Rody's eyes. He shook his head and gently stroked Jojo's chest. The wound that Rody placed his hand at healed rapidly.

Finally, Rody took another look at Jojo's now intact body. He then stood up and murmured, "You may not have loved me, but you still died because of me." Rody closed his eyes and said, "Was it God's blood? In that case, I will use God's blood to resurrect you."

He then lifted Jojo's body with one hand and raised his other hand gradually, with the palm facing down.

Black flames came out from his hand. All the signs of the massacre were burned to ashes including the carriage, the horse, and the loyal guards.

"This is fine... ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Rody sighed and shook his head. He heard a strange voice shouting in his mind. It sounded like a magic chant that was pulling away his soul.

Just as he was ready to leave, a white and holy light appeared behind him. The light then disappeared to reveal an old man with black robes. The old man held a long staff. His face looked like dried tangerines and was full of wrinkles.

"Here..." The old man looked around and finally rested his eyes on Rody. He then asked, "That strong aura earlier. Was that yours?"

Rody turned around and frowned at the old man that had suddenly appeared. "Get lost. My mood right now is terrible."

After saying that, Rody turned and walked away.

The old man then raised his staff and shot a white light towards Rody.

A large wall of light then appeared in front of Rody to block his way.

“Tell me! Who are you? Are you the one that emitted that aura? What happened here?” The old man’s face suddenly wrinkled even more as he said, “No! I smell a vampire’s aura!” His expression then changed as he asked, “What are you? Are you a vampire?”

Rody stretched his hand and gently touched the wall of light that obstructed him. At first, his hand was stopped by the wall of light, but his hand soon broke through the wall easily.

Rody smiled. “A light spell... Hmm, it seems to only be at a low level...” Rody then stopped and mumbled to himself. “Strange. How do I know all these?”

The black-robed old man watched in horror as Rody easily broke through his wall of light. He asked again, “You! What are you?”

Rody shook his head and turned around to look at the old man hatefully. “My mood right now is terrible. Do not disturb me. If you try and stop me again...”

The old man trembled violently. Just from hearing the last few words of the other party, his heart felt cold.

He calmed himself and remembered the Pope’s instruction. He then took a deep breath and had a strange thought. Bullshit! I am one of the most respected Elders of the Church!

The old man gently placed his staff on the floor and spoke in a very solemn voice, “I am one of the most respectable Bishop of the God's Church, Elder Roma! I ask you in the name of the Pope! Are you the one that exuded that earlier aura?”

Rody that had originally intended to walk away suddenly stopped

when he heard the word 'God' He turned around and looked at Elder Roma with a delighted smile.

“Are you one of the Elders at the Church?”

Roma did not know why the other party was laughing. However, when Roma saw that smile, he tensed up a little and exhaled. He then slowly said, “Yes. I am one of the most respected Bishops of the Church. I ask you. What are you? Are you a vampire?”

When he heard the word 'vampire', a queer color flashed in his eyes for an instant. He then shook his head and replied, “I am not a vampire... I am...” Rody then gave a wry smile and continued, “I also do not know what I am right now.”

“Then, was that aura earlier yours?” Roma’s voice became deeper as he continued to ask. “Are you a dragon or a human?”

Rody again shook his head lightly and replied, “I already said that I do not know... I do not know what I am right now... It is probably... hmm...” Rody then gave a cold smile and said, “... I am probably a monster.”

Before Roma could continue to speak, Rody slowly walked towards him and gave a strange smile. He then slowly said, “Since you are one of the Elders of God's religion, I have a question that you might be able to answer.”

“What is the problem?” Roma looked at the other party approaching him and started to become vigilant.

Rody laughed as if he was happy, but his voice sounded cold. “I want to know how to obtain the blood of the so-called God that you believe in.”

Chapter 148: Petrification

“What!” Elder Roma was bewildered and angrily shouted, “Audacious fellow! How dare you speak such disrespectful words about God! You will be executed for heresy! God will punish you for your sins!”

Rody looked at the angry elders of God and smile faintly. “What is wrong? Why are you angry? Is it because you also cannot answer my question?”

He suddenly laughed even more happily and gently knocked his head with one hand. He laughed bitterly as if he had suddenly realized his mistake. “Ah... I almost forgot. I almost forgot what that fatty said. Since the God and Devil War, you all had lost contact with your God... Hahaha... What almighty teachings of God! In fact, it’s just a bunch of pitiful souls who have lost their patrons!”

“God and Devil ... War...” Roma’s expression changed and suddenly shouted, “What did you say! How did you know about these things?”

Rody no longer looked at Roma and coldly said, “Do not stop me again. I am very confused right now. I don’t even know what I will do.”

Rody then walked away with a cold expression, carrying Jojo in his arms.

The cold expression was full of contempt and angered the Elder Roma. He was one of the four Elders of God’s religion and held one of the most influential position in the church of the Radiant continent. He was always aloof, and even the Emperor of the Radiant Empire would show him respect when they met. However, this... this damn guy dared despise him.

In addition, Rody dared say heretical words to God.

“Stop right there!” Roma cried out. His black robes swirled around his body as he gathered his energy. He then looked straight at Rody and said, “In the name of the Pope of God’s religion, I command you to go back with me! The God’s religion will judge you! You must pay for your sins of disrespecting God!”

“Judgement?” Rody laughed towards the sky before his eyes turned vicious. “What judgement? What right does God have to judge me? Why didn’t God say anything when I was poor and struggling in the mud? How come God did not say anything when I risked my life on the battlefield? Why didn’t God say anything when this innocent girl died brutally for me?”

Rody’s voice became more agitated. Finally, he gently looked at Jojo in his arms and coldly said, “If you say that everything in this world is destined by God... then...for this so-called God...” Rody then suddenly raised his head and roared towards heaven, “I refuse to believe in him!”

The clouds rolled in the dark sky as indistinct thunder rolls burst out. Suddenly, there was an earth shattering thunderous sound. A lightning struck like a sharp axe, splitting the vast sky.

“Mad... You are mad...” Roma trembled angrily, and then he shouted, “You will be burned to death at the stake!”

After Roma finished his sentence, he raised his staff high and closed his eyes. He then chanted, “Almighty Radiant God... Strike this rebel with ‘[Divine Lightning](#)’!” After a series of obscure incantations, the clouds started to roll. Faint, crackling sparks could be seen in the dense clouds...

“Heretic! Receive God’s ‘Divine Lightning’!” Roma shouted. He pointed his staff towards Rody. Immediately, the black clouds in the sky seemed to act according to his words. Accompanying an earth-shattering thunder, a huge lightning like an axe in God's hand, stuck down from the sky. It brought with it countless sparks that severely smashed at Rody who was standing on the ground.

There were sparks everywhere as the lightning struck Rody.

Rody just stood on the ground. His body seemed extremely small compared to the size of the lightning. It was as if any individual's personal strength could be ignored by the Divine Lightning.

Immediately after casting the lightning spell, Roma had quickly casted the strongest defensive light spell, 'Crystal Wall', around himself. He then sat behind the wall to watch how the strange man would die from being struck by lightning.

This fellow actually has the aura of a dragon... However, even if he is a real dragon, he would not be able to withstand this kind of lightning!

That huge lightning struck Rody's head and illuminated the darkness. Rody looked calm under the bright light. However, his calmness seemed to hide a turbulent wave.

He raised his hand high and stretched his index finger to point at the sky. After that, his facial expression...

What the hell! He is actually laughing.

Roma almost dropped his staff when he saw the scene...

The lightning fiercely struck at Rody's stretched out index finger. There were a huge variety of violent sparks generated from the lightning. Numerous trees around them successively exploded into pieces, igniting a huge fire.

However, Rody continued to look calm as he stood there. The lightning had struck his finger but he did not even appear to be harmed.

After that, Rody held Jojo and walked out of the raging fire surrounding them. Step by step, he walked towards Roma.

"Is this God's Divine Lightning?" Rody laughed coldly. He suddenly looked at the rolling clouds in the sky and shouted, "Come on! Hit me again! Is that all you have got?"

Roma had turned pale from fear. He slowly moved his lips and repeated over and over again as though he only knew how to say those words, “How come... How come... What actually is he...”

Rody stood two meters away from Roma. In front of Rody was the strongest defensive light spell, ‘Crystal Wall’.

Rody closed his eyes and burst out into neurotic laughter. “I understand... I understand now...” He opened his eyes and slowly whispered, “First, you used ‘Divine Lightning’. After that, you used ‘Crystal Wall’. Both of these are advanced light spells.²”

Rody then looked at the pale Elder Roma and sighed. “Do you think I am very frightening?” Rody paused for a moment and slowly shook his head. He then continued, “You are wrong. I am not so powerful.”

Rody suddenly stretched his finger and gently touched the ‘Crystal Wall’ in front of him.

Although Rody had only gently touched it, there was a loud shattering sound. The ‘Crystal Wall’, which was the strongest defensive light spell that could even withstand the ‘Divine Lightning’ spell, had just cracked.

After that , there was a continuous cracking sound. With the place Rody touched as the center, countless small cracks quickly spread until the entire ‘Crystal Wall’ fissured open... Finally, with a loud crash, the ‘Crystal Wall’ shattered.

Rody looked at the frightened and trembling Elder Roma and sighed again. He shook his head and said, “In fact, I am not as strong as I look... Right now, I am still very weak... But... Let me tell you a little secret...”

Rody then gave an evil laughter. “A lot of things I never knew had suddenly appeared in my mind. These things confuse me... However, just now, when you used the ‘Divine Lightning’, my mind suddenly seemed to naturally know one thing or should I

say... a little secret...”

Rody then gave a mysterious laughter as he softly said, “My current body is completely immune to all types of light magic. Unless your magic is as powerful as the power of Domain Force... otherwise, even if your strength is not worse than mine, you will not be able to harm me.”

After that, Rody gently grabbed Roma’s staff and firmly pinched it. The staff was immediately broken into two.

Roma did not react. He could only shiver in fear as he looked at his opponent near him. The closer his opponent got, the more the man’s aura made him fearful.

“What should I do?” Rody grinned. “I do not like to randomly kill people, but right now, my mind is in a mess. My mind is telling me that I must kill you... How about this...”

Rody slowly stretched out his hand. He seemed to be gently stroking and covering Elder Roma’s head.

That was a very strange scene— a young man arrogantly stroking an old man’s head.

After that, Roma started to petrify, starting from his head. After a short moment, his entire body had turned to stone.

Rody sighed softly, and then he said, “Well, just stay here. I suppose the other people from God’s religion will come and look for you. Rest assured. I did not kill you. You will recover after a few hundred years... Hahaha...”

Rody held the quiet Jojo and walked away, laugh maliciously.

“Strange... How did such malicious thoughts appear in my head?” Along the way back, Rody felt dizzy, and his heart felt strange.

Arriving at the city, Rody effortlessly jumped over the twenty-meters tall walls and thus entered the Imperial Capital. The guards

did not notice him at all.

Rody then looked at Jojo in his arms and sighed. “I will definitely find a way to resurrect you, but I do not know how to find the Blood of God. For now, I can only put you in a safe place. I will use a special way to preserve your body like this but... where is the safest place to put you?”

Rody then saw the Tower of light in the Imperial Capital. The huge crystal on top of the tower shone brilliantly under the moonlight.

Rody did not hesitate to run towards the Tower of Light together with Jojo.

He ran abnormally fast and was like a ghost in the night in the streets of the Imperial Capital. Without disturbing anyone, Rody quietly arrived at the Imperial Capital’s Tower of Light. He went back to the dark room where he had found Dandong’s notes and gently pushed the wall.

The secret chamber was dark and murky. Although there was no light, Rody could see everything clearly.

The surrounding furnishings looked the same as last time. It seemed that nobody had found that place. First, he placed Jojo gently on the table. After that, he bit his finger and gently dropped a drop of blood on her forehead.

Although Rody did not know what he was doing, his mind had strange thoughts as if he naturally knew what to do.

The drop of blood that landed on Jojo’s forehead immediately disappeared under Jojo’s skin. Not a single trace of the blood was left on the skin. Rody then pointed the bloody finger at Jojo and drew strange patterns. The patterns had stars, moons and all other kinds of strange shapes. The patterns enveloped and surrounded Jojo.

After all that, Rody started to sweat and gently sighed. He stood

outside the drawn patterns and calmly looked. Jojo looked as if she was sleeping and could wake up at any time.

Rody then shook his head and turned to walk out.

Before he closed off the wall, he took another glimpse of Jojo. Rody felt his heart ache and whispered, “Forgive me for putting you in a dark and lonely place... I... I will definitely save you!”

Rody forcefully closed off the wall again and started to walk away, without looking back.

Inside the dark room, a mouse appeared. It approached Jojo’s body in the dark. The moment it touched the pattern that Rody had drawn in blood, it immediately turned into a light and was flung away. When it dropped back to the ground, it had changed into a small stone.

Raw says ‘Lightning of Anger’. But Lightning of Fury, Angry Lightning or all other possible more accurate variations just don’t sound as cool.

Chapter 149: Myka's Feelings

It was in the middle of the night. Diane sat on the chair with a tired expression, but she still stayed awake. From time to time, she looked at the door. When there were occasional signs of noise outside, she would immediately get up to listen.

“This bastard! It is already late yet he still has not returned from that place!” She cursed quietly. Suddenly, she sensed something strange. She stood up and immediately walked towards the door to open it. She saw a man standing at the door.

Diane was shocked when she saw an unfamiliar face. She instinctively stepped back and took out her dagger.

Rody shook his head and whispered, “It’s me.”

The familiar voice that said, “It’s me” made Diane feel relaxed. She was relieved, then she put her dagger back in and looked at the person in front of her with a surprised expression. She whispered, “Are you... that Tulip? Your face...”

Rody shook his head and lightly said, “This is my real appearance...” He then laughed softly and continued, “But this is better than last time.”

Diane’s mouth dropped open. She would not have believed that the person in front of her would be the impostor of the Duke if Rody did not speak.

Rody’s blonde hair had turned blue. His blue eyes had turned brown. He was also no longer as handsome as before. However, the edge and corners of his face showed that he was an unyielding man.

However, Diane could also see that the face was not hiding its expression of grief.

What happened tonight?

Rody shook his head and said in a soft voice, “There is something I need you to help me with. Follow me.”

After that, he grabbed Diana’s hands and pulled her outside.

Diane was surprised. “Going out again? Aren’t you afraid...”

Rody interrupted her with a faint laugh and asked, “What is there to be afraid of? I look like this right now. Who would think that I am the Duke of the Tulip Family?”

Diane was stunned for a moment, but then she also started to laugh. “That is also right... But you don’t seem to be alright. What happened? Your expression does not look good.”

Rody then mentioned casually. “Nothing much... One of my friends was killed by a vampire. I killed the vampire, and I also got rid of an Elder of God’s religion.”

Diane was shocked and quickly let go of Rody’s hand. She took a step back and asked, “Wh...What did you say? Vampire? Elder of God’s religion? You... Has your body recovered?”

Before Rody could answer, Diane shook her head vigilantly. “No... Even if you had recovered, you would not be able to achieve those feats... Could it be?”

Rody’s expression turned cold. “Are you afraid of me? That’s right. I used that dragon’s power! That’s right! I feel like I am no longer a human now! I am a monster!”

Diane became afraid when she saw Rody’s furious expression. She slowly replied. “No. That is not what I meant.”

Rody looked at her and said softly. “I know the reason you were following me... But right now, I need you to help me do something and leave the Imperial Capital.”

“Leave? Why?”

Rody started to laugh coldly and then he replied, “That is because the Imperial Capital will soon become chaotic...”

Myka could not sleep.

After Rody had left, there was a ruckus outside. The ruckus had lasted through half the night. She had heard that two people died in the brothel. They had died tragically with their necks broken.

When the public security soldiers had arrived, Madam Sophie had also disappeared. Without anybody managing the brothel, there was confusion everywhere. In the end, the soldiers had detained a few of the servants.

Myka was worried about Rody. Rody had secretly come back to the Imperial Capital. If he was found, others would deliberately frame him for the complicated situation in the Imperial Capital. Those aiming for the throne had always been worried that they would be unable to get rid of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

She secretly sneaked out to look but did not notice anything. She then returned to her room and thought to herself.

I have decided to leave the next morning. Would anybody notice if I secretly escaped?

Rody asked me to go to the South and find his friends and not to go to the Tulip Family's territory. Does he understand my intentions?

Myka then shook her head and smiled wryly. Myka, stop being silly.

However, Myka could not help but have a complicated feeling when she thought that she would finally leave behind the Imperial Capital, the brothel and her connection to Seth and the Tulip Family.

She then remembered Rody's laugh and his warm eyes. Although Rody looked like Seth, his kind and warm eyes were pure, unlike Seth. She remembered him agitatedly saying, "Who dares to bully you? I will go and slaughter him!"

Unfortunately, Rody did not know that Myka's face was full of

tears when she heard him say it.

Compared to the guy that had disappeared without a trace, Myka thought that Rody was sometimes cute. He was in danger because of secretly returning to the Imperial Capital, but he still risked his life to come and see her.

Myka then went out for a while and took out a short harp. Her fingers then gently played a lighthearted melody.

Myka sang as she played the harp.

“The hem is gently raised, it’s the dance of the monarch!

The sword is ruthless, the beauty dares not dream!”

She sang the same thing again and again until she herself felt that it was crazy.

These sentences were from the second time Rody had visited her and before he left for the battlefield in the Northwest. These were the words he said after watching her dance.

These words were extremely strange. It was as if they were the words of a poet but at the same time, it was not alike. The poems made by the bard of the Radiant Empire were different compared to the one that was just said. When she thought about it, she felt that Rody’s words were more meaningful and were also in a different style.

Myka could not help but laugh when she remembered Rody blushed after speaking too much and said, “As long as I come back from the Northwest, I will come and see you.”

She stood up and went to the window. She then opened the window and looked at the night sky. She didn’t know whether to be happy or sad as she looked at the sky.

Suddenly, she heard a voice calling from behind her. “Myka.”

Myka was surprised. She turned around to see a tall man standing behind her. The flame from the candle in her room

swayed, revealing a resolute face that was looking calmly at her. The door behind them was slightly close and Myka did not know when he entered the room.

“It’s me. Rody!”

Myka smiled when she heard a familiar voice. She did not seem surprised by his appearance and quietly asked. “Are you alright? There was a ruckus outside, and I was worried about you.”

Rody shook his head and replied. “I am fine.”

Rody then paused for a moment before continuing. “I came here to pick you up. I will now take you away! I will take you away from this place!”

Myka trembled, feeling as if she was in a dream.

‘I will take you away from this place!’

These were the words she had always wished to hear. At first, she had hoped that one other person would say it, but now, these words were spoken by Rody.

Myka’s face immediately turned red as she replied without hesitation. “Yes!”

Without taking anything with her, Myka walked to Rody’s side and softly said. “Let’s go.”

Rody was stunned and asked, “Don’t you need to pack up?”

Myka smiled and glanced at the room. Although she was smiling, her eyes were steadfast. “No. I don’t want to take these with me!”

Rody nodded his head, and then he suddenly held Myka’s waist. Myka was surprised and turned red. Her breathing became quicker. After that, Rody whispered in her ear. “There is someone at the door. I can enter but you cannot leave that way.”

He then carried Myka with one hand and went to the window. He looked at the situation below before saying, “Hold on tight.”

Myka could only feel her heart beating crazily and her face burning hot. She closed her eyes in confusion only to hear the wind blowing. She felt herself very close to Rody's chest and did not know anything else. She also did not know where she was at and subconsciously clutched Rody's clothes tightly.

She felt her body floating but was not sure for how long. She felt as if she was fluttering in the clouds. Finally, when she landed, she opened her eyes and found herself already on one of the roads outside of the Imperial Capital.

A gorgeous carriage with a Silver family insignia was in front of them. However, the insignia looked unfamiliar. Myka was stunned for a moment before she asked, "Did you prepare this? Where did you get this?"

Before Rody could answer, a girl appeared from behind the carriage and angrily asked, "Where did it come from? Hmph, was it stolen?"

Myka's expression became uncomfortable as she looked at the girl wearing a red dress. Although she could not see her face clearly in the night, she could vaguely tell that it was a beautiful girl.

More importantly, women are, by nature, very sensitive. Myka could sense that the other girl was also uneasy with her.

Rody nodded and simply answered, "It was stolen."

Diane sighed when Rody said, "It was stolen".

She was very upset because the carriage was stolen. The insane fellow had changed too much in one night.

In order to steal the carriage, Diana saw Rody casually went inside a noble's mansion. Diane waited anxiously outside as she heard the sound of fighting inside the mansion. After that, she saw the crazy fellow holding a carriage and the horses with two hands and jumping from behind the wall.

After that, in the night streets of the Imperial Capital, Rody once

again jumped over a ten meters high wall carrying that horse together with the carriage.

This is too ridiculous!

However, Rody indifferently said, “There is no other way. There are no other places to find carriages in the middle of the night. We can only do this.”

Rody did not seem afraid at all, but the horses he was holding seemed to be so afraid that their legs had turned soft...

When Diane saw the woman in Rody’s arms, she could not help but think, He did all this for her.

Rody let go of Myka and helped her up the carriage. He then faced Myka and said, “It’s too bad that you cannot ride a horse. Fortunately, there is a carriage, and it would not be too slow. She is my friend. I asked her to take you to that place I talked about. Don’t worry. It will be safe with her around.”

Diane’s expression was cold and she felt angry. She looked at the beautiful woman and sighed. “No wonder this fellow is so crazy about her...she really is...”

Tonight, Diane had accompanied Rody in the Imperial Capital, running back and forth several times. Finally, she promised Rody to escort one of his friends to meet Sky. However, she did not expect that it would be such a beautiful woman. Even though she was angry, she could not say anything.

Myka trembled and whispered, “You... Are you not coming with me?”

Rody looked apologetic as he replied, “No, I still have a lot of things to do in the Imperial Capital. Also... The two of you better leave quickly. In the next few days, the Imperial Capital will be in turmoil. I would not be able to relax if the two of you were still here.”

Rody looked at Myka’s tender expression and felt moved. He

could not help but have a strange feeling and unknowingly whispered, “Go there first. When I am done with my business in the Imperial Capital, I will definitely come and find you!”

Myka looked at Rody, and then she looked at the girl beside her. She suddenly smiled and said, “I understand. I will listen to you.”

When Myka finally got onto the carriage, Rody turned around to look at Diane. He then said, “Thank you.”

Diane was a bit uneasy and coldly replied, “I will accomplish the things I promised you! I will take your lover to Sky safely. However, I will not care about what happens after that!”

Rody froze for a moment before he smiled. “She is not my lover.” He then continued, “You should also leave quickly. Once the two of you are gone, I would not need to worry so much while doing my work.”

Diane nodded as her heart turned soft. She could not help but say, “You should also be careful! You are possessed by the Mystic Dragon and must not act recklessly. Otherwise, my Silvermoon Clan would come after you even if they had to throw away their lives...”

Rody suddenly gave a bitter laugh. “Throw away their lives...” Rody then looked at the sky and said, “The weather tomorrow should be good. In a good weather, the blood might flow a little bit faster.¹”

Rody’s indifference made Diane’s heart feel cold. Before she could reply, he had already pushed her onto the carriage and whispered, “Sorry to trouble you.”

Diane sighed. She then whipped the horses, and the carriage started to move slowly.

Myka, who was sitting inside the carriage, suddenly opened the window. She looked at Rody and softly said, “The hem is gently raised, it’s the dance of the monarch! The sword is ruthless, Myka

dares not dream!”

That phrase was what Rody had said that day. However, this time, she substituted her name in and did not use the original phrase. That meant that she had clearly expressed her own feelings.

Rody looked at Myka’s haggard face and became anxious. He then loudly shouted. “I will come and find you! Definitely!”

Rody then watched the carriage travel south and gradually disappear from his view. He then released the breath he had been holding and turned around to look at the towering walls of the Imperial Capital.

The Imperial Capital was quiet in the middle of the night. Rody suddenly smiled and murmured. “Great! Now I can make this place livelier.”

Rody did not run and slowly walked towards the Imperial Capital.

Rody remembered what Dandong’s notes had stated. If a person could not understand his opponent’s strategy but had absolute power, it was better to just put away strategy and fight with brute force. With the absolute power to destroy, even geniuses at strategizing would easily be torn to shreds.

As Rody advanced, his smile gradually subsided.

“Absolute power... Breaking through with brute force... This method really suits me.” Rody whispered. “Dandong was really an interesting person.”

“Bayan, wait for me! I will become your nightmare tonight! I believe that the Prince’s mansion is in the West...”

After confirming the direction to the Imperial Capital, he accelerated his pace.

As the carriage sped to the South, Myka and Diane were silent.

“You... Are you Rody’s friend?” Myka who grew up in the brothel had finally broken the ice.

“What about you? Are you his lover?” Diane asked back.

Myka realized that the other party had an unfriendly tone, and she just gave a cold smile.

Diane felt angry when Myka laughed and could not help but say, “Didn’t you know? The only person that guy likes is Miss Nicole of the Tulip Family. He knew that Miss Nicole was about to marry the Emperor and quickly rushed back, regardless of everything... you ...”

“I know.” Myka replied calmly. “I was the one who told him about Miss Nicole.”

Diane looked as if she swallowed an egg whole. “You?”

She turned around and no longer cared about the horses galloping in front. She looked at Myka with a surprised expression and loudly asked, “Don’t you like that guy? Why did you do that? Didn’t you know that he liked Miss Nicole? You... You...You...”

“What about me?” Myka gave a wry smile and had an unusually calm expression.

Diane could no longer endure it and shouted loudly, “You don’t have a chance to marry him! When he goes to Miss Nicole, what are you going to do?”

“So, what?” Myka finally spoke. She raised her eyebrow as she looked at the surprised Diane and indifferently replied, “I will just be his concubine!”

Chapter 150: Draw your sword! I am in a hurry!

Bayan's father, Prince Barond, lives in a mansion located at the western side of the Imperial Capital.

That area was where all the rich and powerful families in the Empire live. They were unlike the common nobles and ministers of the Empire. Those families all had many kinds of connection with the Imperial Family.

The law for inheriting the titles of the nobles in the Radiant Empire was strict. The nobles could not inherit their titles if they were incompetent. That was something proposed two hundred years ago by the Sage Dandong to ensure that the people working at the upper class of the Empire did not rapidly degrade. However, that also left Dandong with many enemies.

Almost all the nobles considered Dandong their biggest enemy. That was the case when he was alive, and even after his death, he was still hated.

Of course, like all things, there were nobles who were happy and those who were unhappy. That law that Dandong implemented was hated by the common nobles, but it was like a wonderful dream to the Imperial nobles.

Why?

That was because the inheritance law only applied to the ordinary nobles and did not apply to the Imperial nobles.

In other words, the Imperial nobles were not within the jurisdiction of that law. The inheritance of the Imperial noble titles were unrestricted.

In the Radiant Empire, there were numerous noble families that fell because the family had given birth to two generations of useless children. That law was implemented to ensure that the

Empire's center of powers would have a healthy renewal and to ensure that the empire's power was not dominated by any particular powerful family and thus, affect the dignity of the Imperial powers.

Similarly, to work as a senior official in the Empire, one must have an equally powerful title. For example, the Finance Minister was an Earl, the Military Minister was a Marquis, and the Commander was the Duke.

Officials without titles were minorities, and most of them were only low ranked officials.

Without any title, a person would be unable to enter the high ranks of the Empire. Although it was not written in the law, it was something understood by all.

The existence of that law greatly limited the opportunity for the ordinary nobles to obtain power and authority in the Empire. On the other hand, the Imperial families were not restricted by that law. As a result, the Imperial families of the Empire flourished faster than the Imperial families of other countries.

In fact, when Rody was training to become a Duke, Andy had also secretly complained that Abbas the Great also hoped to use this decree to preserve the Imperial families' power and limit the development of the other nobles.

As a result of this, they were more particular about the residential zoning of the nobles.

The ordinary nobles lived at the East of the Victory Square while those with relationships to the Imperial Family lived at the West of Victory Square.

Rody was walking through the streets at night. The streets were wide enough to accommodate four to five carriages side by side. Those belonged to the rich and powerful families. Occasionally, he walked by a few large doors. Those doors were decorated with

their families insignias. Unlike the ordinary nobles, those insignias were golden. They were symbols of the Imperial Families' honor.

In the Empire, only the Imperial Families could use a golden insignia. The only exception to that was the Tulip Family. However, if the Emperor were to really marry Nicole, then the Tulip Family's golden insignia would be worthy of its name.

Prince Barond was the Emperor's younger brother from the same mother. Naturally, he would be extremely respected. Although there were other princes and uncles in the family, none of them had as much influence as Prince Barond.

Besides that, Prince Barond was ambitious and had secretly gathered a lot of support from the other nobles. Prince Barond already had his own wings. Naturally, the only person who did not know that was the stupid Emperor. He tried too hard to suppress the Tulip Family that was stealing the limelight. As a result, he did not expect the biggest threat to be within his own family.

“Let me help that bastard Emperor...” Rody gently sighed. He was already standing in front of the door to Prince Barond's mansion.

Prince Barond's mansion in front of him was luxurious beyond Rody's imaginations. The building was really not just a mansion - it was actually a small castle, a small palace!

It had a tall fence with a huge gate made of iron and wood. The golden insignia hung on the gate. It seems that the insignia was cleaned every day. As a result, it shined brightly even in the night.

Not far from the gates was the small castle painted in gold. Although it was very luxurious, Rody, as a soldier, could also see that the small castle played a militaristic role.

The small castle was built with large rocks and was painted gold. Rather than calling it a luxurious residence, it would be more appropriate to call it a golden military fortress.

Rody shook his head and sighed. “Such an obvious move, yet the Emperor could not see it. Why else would a Prince turn his home into a military fortress?”

Based on a general estimate, Rody was sure that, previously, if he wanted to capture this place with his elite Wolf Fang soldiers, he would need several months. That was assuming that there was enough provisions inside the castle.

The strong and bulky rock was not something that could be destroyed by ordinary arrows and catapults. Besides that, arrow crenels was built on the surrounding of the castle.

Rody jumped over the walls from outside.

After he landed, he realized that there were almost no guards on patrol. However, he also noticed that by standing in the room on top of the castle, the surroundings could easily be seen.

The outside was lax, but the inside was strict. No wonder there was no need for patrols.

Rody did not bother to hide himself and walked straight to the castle.

On one side, not far from the castle, was a large pond. Like all the other noble mansions, there were a lot of ornamental plants and fishes in the pond. However, with just a glance, Rody found a problem.

Surrounding the castle was a deep trench. A row of a kind of tall, flowery plant was planted to hide the trench from public eyes. The entire castle appeared to be surrounded by an ocean of flowers. However, if something happened, they could dig open the pond, and the pond water would flow into the trench and turn it into a natural moat.

“It is certainly not so simple.” Rody sighed. “The person who designed this castle must be a powerful guy with good military talent. They probably had already planned to usurp the throne

when they started constructing this castle.”

As Rody walked forward with both his hand behind him, he heard a sharp whistle. Two groups of soldiers rushed out from the sides of the castle. With swords in their hands, they charged at Rody.

Rody then heard a loud rebuke and suddenly laughed. He looked at the surrounding flowers and lightly said, “I wonder what will happen when these flowers are covered in blood...”

Bayan had returned very early that night.

He had immediately left the moment he was eavesdropped on at the brothel. He was extremely confident of Madam Sophie.

This person needed to climb the wall to eavesdrop and is likely to be someone without ability. But why hasn't Sophie returned?

Rody, the Vampire Sophie and the Elder of God's religion had fought far away from the city. That is why even though the battle was earth-shattering with thunders and lightnings, the people in the city did not notice. At most, they only thought that the weather was weird. The good weather suddenly turned bad. There were a few flashes of lightning before the weather turned back to normal.

Bayan held a glass with one hand and a pretty maid in the other hand. His hand did not stop stroking her face.

However, his heart seemed to have a fire, and he constantly thought of that person in the brothel. I will go there again tomorrow. This time, I will not let her escape!

In front of Bayan was a grumpy vampire. The vampire was also holding a glass filled with red liquid. However, this was not wine...

The vampire licked the blood from his mouth. His blood red eyes continued to stare at the maid in Bayan's arms. Bayan smiled coldly before he suddenly stood up and forcefully pushed the maid in his arms to the vampire. “Take it!”

Having said that, Bayan leisurely walked out, still holding the glass in his hands. He then heard a short and miserable cry from behind him.

Bayan held the glass as he stood at the corridor and looked at the sky. His heart felt weird.

Why am I so jumpy tonight? It feels like something is about to happen...

He then looked at his surroundings and laughed. This place is extremely well guarded. There are a large number of guards and even strong vampires. What am I afraid of? This place is even safer than the Imperial Palace!

Just as Bayan was thinking about that, he immediately saw something that surprised him.

He saw a figure lightly jumping over the nearby fence into the castle, dropping like a leaf into the prince's residence.

The figure then leisurely walked around the pond and looking at the flowers as if he was walking in his own garden.

The surprising thing was that the silhouette looked familiar.

What the hell are the guards doing?

Bayan was about to scream. However, the guards were loyal to their duties. The guards at the top of the castle walls had immediately noticed that someone had trespassed.

It was strange as this was the Prince's mansion. Who would be so daring as to trespass that area?

Two groups of guards immediately rushed out.

Bayan tightly held the glass as he watched the situation under the castle.

However, soon, he was unable to hold his glass of wine steadily. He obviously felt that the wine in his glass had spilled onto his clothes. That was because his hands were trembling.

That intruder looks like... No, he is simply a ghost!

There were about a dozen guards holding sharp swords in their hands. In ordinary times, they were vigorous like ruthless wolves and tigers. However, in front of the intruder, it was as if they were made of paper. They fell the moment the intruder bumped into them and were no longer able to stand back up.

With every burst of blood, there were short and horrible screams.

Bayan dropped his wine glass. It fell to the ground and broke into pieces.

Hearing the screams, the vampire finally came out. His mouth was full of blood as he smiled, revealing his white fangs. "I smell blood. What happened?"

Bayan swore to God that he had never realized that the vampire could be so cute.

"Down there! There is an intruder!" Bayan shouted out without bothering about his dignity.

The vampire narrowed his eyes as he looked at the scene below the castle.

About a dozen guards had fallen to the ground. There was a tall man standing there, looking at his bloodstained hands.

The vampire screamed and suddenly jumped out. His body flew out from the corridor, and then he spread his wings in the air. With his sharp scream, there were screams from several windows in the castle, as if responding to him.

After that, more vampires flew out from those windows.

"Go! Drink his blood dry!" The vampire arrogantly shouted.

Hearing that order, the other vampires returned to their original form and rushed towards Rody on the ground.

Rody stood there and looked indifferently at the group of

vampires rushing towards him. He coldly said, “So, you have finally appeared?”

He stretched his hand as if he was grabbing the air. After that, he heard one of the small vampires scream. In mid air, the vampire’s body rolled into a ball and exploded.

Rody grabbed a few times, and the screams continued. The other small vampires also started to fall from the air like birds with broken wings.

Rody looked at one of the young vampires near him. The vampire was evidently much smaller sized compared to Sophie. At that moment, she had not died but continued to twitch on the ground.

Rody laughed bitterly and stretched out his hand to grab the vampire from the ground. He watched the vampire struggle in his hand and lightly said, “Remember not to be a vampire again in your next life.”

He tightened his grip and blood shot out from the throat of the vampire. Rody broke the vampire’s neck, and it finally died.

“Ah!” The large vampire in the air screamed in grief. He then slowly descended in front of Rody and screamed. “Who the hell are you?”

Rody ignored him as he looked at his bloodstained hands. He shook his head and sighed. “Now my hands are dirty...” Ignoring the violent vampire in front of him, Rody bent down and picked up a sword. He then gave a wry smile. “I heard that a vampire’s body is stronger than a human’s body. Normal weapons are unable to hurt you vampires. So, how about we test it out...”

Bayan could no longer stand. He turned around and shouted, “Come, men! Call everyone! Call them out!”

Bayan no longer had time to watch the battle below the castle. He went into his room and grabbed a sword. He then rushed out of the main door and found that hundreds of guards had already lined up

there. Some who were faster had already rushed out of the castle. However, they were standing behind and were watching the vampire fight with Rody.

It was not that the guards refused to fight. It was because the scene was too scary.

They were all Prince Barond's death soldiers and were extremely valiant. However, with that scenario in front of them, none of them stepped forward.

Courage was one thing. Being sent to death was another matter entirely.

Bayan and a large number of guards rushed out the castle gates to see a burst of dazzling light. The light blocked everybody's view. The radiating energy also blew at everyone and made it difficult for them to open their eyes...

Suddenly there was a muffled 'chi' sound...

All that dazzling light drew back.

Bayan saw something bloody flying in the sky. The bloody object changed direction and flew towards Bayan, causing him to take a few steps back in fear.

A ferocious-looking and badly mangled head severely smashed on the ground in front of him. The blood red eyes seemed to have lost their demeanor but still had a look of despair and fear...

The vampire's body remained standing in front of Rody. His blood sprayed all over Rody's face and body. His entire body was covered in blood as if he were a blood-man.

"Ah! Ah!" Bayan could no longer stop screaming. He shouted, "Kill him! Quickly kill him!"

The guards immediately rushed up. There were also magicians that floated in the sky and started to throw fireballs at Rody. The fireballs flew towards Rody with a whistling sound. Lightning also

struck, and countless screams could be heard.

Rody was like an ancient demon covered in blood. The spells the magicians had casted were all deflected away from Rody. Some had even deflected back to the magicians in the air and shot them down.

Rody raised the sword in his hand. Immediately, several heads flew away. Their blood shot out of their bodies like fireworks.

The guards were finally frightened. They screamed, dropped their weapons and ran in different directions.

Rody also did not chase them. He gently wiped the thick blood from his face. The sword in his hand was also dripping in blood.

He then slowly walked forward, step by step, towards Bayan who was paralyzed in fear on the ground.

Bayan tightly held the sword in his hand as if he was holding the last thing that could save his life.

How is this possible! How is this possible! Eight vampires, six magicians, and hundreds of guards! How could they not even defeat one person! Who is he? Is he Master Autumn? No! Is he an assassin sent by the Emperor?

Rody looked at Bayan coldly as if he was looking at an ant.

At that moment, the sky had started to turn bright as the rays of the sunlight appeared. It was almost dawn.

Rody looked at the sky and murmured, "The sky is turning bright... Not much time left..."

"Vampires, magicians and warrior guards... are there any powers that you have not used?" Rody then raised his sword and pointed it at Bayan. He then spoke in a very arrogant and impatient tone, "Quickly pull out your sword! I am in a hurry!"

Chapter 151: Dracula Spear

Rody looked at Bayan who was on the ground. He raised his gleaming sword and was about to swing it down. At that moment, something black flew at high speeds from a distance. The bright streaks at the edge of the eastern sky seemingly mingled with it, each enhancing the other's beauty. It immediately arrived at the Prince's palace with a trail of flames behind it.

Rody was about to cut off Bayan's head when he heard a sharp voice from the sky shouting, "You cannot kill him!"

Rody suddenly stopped and turned around to look at the sky. The darkness before the dawn made the sky look gloomy. That person was floating in the air with his long cloak. The slender figure hid behind the cloak and seemed to carry an evil aura.

The floating man then stretched out his hand. There was a flash of light, and after that, a spear had appeared in his hands. The spear was completely black, except for its pointed end which was a blood red. There were also red stains below the spearhead... Rody felt an invisible pressure from the spear in the man's hands. It was as if the sky has fallen. This made Rody feel somewhat gloomy.

"This is the ... Dracula Spear?" Rody showed a trace of surprise. He then looked up at the man in the sky and asked loudly. "Is that the Dracula Spear? Are you a vampire?"

The slender figure in the air spoke with a low voice, "I did not think you could recognize Dracula Spear! That's right. I am a vampire, Prince Simao!" His aura had spread all over the place. The flowers that were exposed to his dark aura started to slowly wither.

"Did you kill all these other vampires alone?" He asked coldly in the air. "What are you? Are you from the dragon race? Why are you dragons getting in the way of us vampires?"

Rody laughed bitterly and pointed his sword to the sky. "I am not from the dragon race. However, since you are a vampire, come down here and die!"

Simao sneered. His eyes were different from the other vampires. One of Simao's eyes was red while the other was black. His heterochromatic eyes had an evil glint!

Simao laughed lightly and then spoke from mid-air, "Good. Let me taste the blood of dragons. I haven't tasted the blood of dragons for a long time."

Before they had even finished talking, they had already started to move.

Rody jumped and shot towards the sky like an arrow. His sword emitted a black aura as if it was a violent black dragon.

The Dracula spear also swung forward at Rody's sword as it emitted a shrill sound.

The two black auras clashed and then the sky shook. It was as if all the stars in the sky were about to fall.

The sword in Rody's hands cried out sorrowfully, and with a 'ting' sound, the blade broke. The steel sword broke into numerous pieces as if it was made of glass. All that was left in Rody's hands was the sword hilt.

After breaking Rody's sword, the spear forcefully stabbed through Rody's shoulder with a 'thud' sound.

After bathing in the dragon's blood, Rody was no longer vulnerable to common weapons. However, red blood had started to splash out from his body. The point of Dracula's spear suddenly emitted a black light. Rody grunted from within the black light and then fell down from the sky...

"Boom!" Rody crashed into the ground, and a crater that was a few meters wide was formed. He struggled to stand up, his eyes betraying a hint of anger. He looked at the blood flowing from the

wound in his shoulder. A black aura appeared to wrap his shoulder injury, healing the wound rapidly.

"That Dracula Spear is a fine weapon!" Rody gritted his teeth. "It really is the legendary demon weapon Dracula had used to injure the Gods." Rody suddenly kicked a sword into the air. He transformed that sword into a gleaming light in the dark of the night, and sent it shooting into the air at Simao.

Simao waved his spear and broke the sword. He immediately shattered it into numerous pieces and sneered at Rody on the ground. "Dragon man! You are a fool! The weapon in my hands is a Vampire treasure, the Dracula Spear. Even God himself cannot withstand it! Do you think you can fight with me using these garbage tools?

Rody frowned in anger and whispered to himself, "Impossible... Why am I not able to defeat him? Why am I not able to defeat him? He is just a vampire!"

Rody suddenly roared loudly towards the sky. The black flames around his body erupted, forming a massive ball of raging black fire. Rody's eyes turned black as he stretched out his palm. The black flames condensed into a black cloud on his palm.

Rody then gave a strange laugh. After that, he suddenly spoke in a strange language, "#@@# \$"

The black cloud in his hands became more and more dense and turbulent. It rapidly condensed into a black fireball. Black sparks crackled on the surface of the fireball.

When Simao heard Rody speak in the strange language, he immediately jumped as if he had just been slashed. "You are a dragon! You really are a dragon! You just spoke in the dragon's language. You ... Ahh!"

In fact, the vampire immediately understood the meaning of Rody's words. His green face immediately became twisted. Sweat

had also started to appear on his forehead. His red and black heterochromatic eyes looked at Rody in surprise and trembled. "Impossible! Impossible!"

Rody paid no attention. His body shook gently. His shirt tore open to reveal his steely muscles and the black dragon on his chest that looked like it would soar into the sky anytime.

The muscles in his arms shook violently as a black cloud covered his arm.

Simao who was still in the air could not stop shivering as if he had just seen the most horrifying thing in the world.

Other people may not understand the dragon language but Simao understood it clearly. The words that Rody had just said fell into Simao's ears like a never-ending nightmare. That was because the words said were:

'Mystic Dragon Purge.'

"Apologies..." Rody smiled evilly. "I have not used this technique in a long time and am taking longer than usual."

Suddenly, there was an earth shattering dragon roar. The black flames on Rody's hand became stronger. Finally, with a loud sound, a black fiery dragon flew out from within the flames on his hand. The black fiery dragon opened its mouth and roared. Carrying a long trail of black flames, it shot towards Simao.

The fiery dragon's body was completely made out of black fire. This fire could burn everything in the world like hell fire. Even the air seemed to burn at the places the black fiery dragon passed by.

Simao exclaimed in fright and quickly covered half his face with his black cloak. He also quickly flung the Dracula's spear.

The black spear transformed into a huge ferocious bat in the black mist. The dark figure sped towards the black dragon.

On one side, there was an angry, roaring black dragon; on the

other side, there was a ferocious looking black bat. The two entities collided in the sky, and a large fireball appeared in that place. Another loud explosion could be heard, and even the the huge rocks that were used to build the castle had started to tremble. The sturdy rock walls trembled and cracked, forming frightening fracture lines. After that, there was another explosion, and half of the palace had started to crash.

The flowers and shrubs in the area instantly turned into ashes and disappeared.

The fort walls of the Prince's mansion as well as the surrounding luxurious noble houses within a few hundred meters outside the mansion also came crashing down. The rubble fell everywhere, and countless screams could be heard everywhere in the night.

The explosion in the air had destroyed everything within a radius of several hundred meters.

Everything on the ground had already turned into ruins and exposed the gray soil. Even the green, stone-slabbed street had been torn apart!

The light misty clouds had been blown away by the explosion. The starry sky became extremely clear.

In mid-air, Simao was safely hiding behind a black ball of light. However, the strong force of the clash had still managed to push him a little off-balance.

Rody was on the ground with his hands extended. Any air charging towards him would be immediately deflected out to his sides.

The huge dragon and the large bat clashed and exploded into a thousand blackish lights that dissipated in the air.

"Thud." The black spear fell from the sky and embedded itself into the ground.

Once everything was over, both Rody and Simao opened their

eyes wide. They both then shouted at the same time, "Impossible!"

Rody shouted, "Impossible! How did you block that attack!"

Simao shouted, "Impossible! How are you able to use that attack!"

Simao gave out a strange cry as he descended. He then stood on the ground and pulled out the Dracula Spear from the ground. He then held it in his hands and he glared at Rody as if he was looking at his sworn enemy and roared, "Who are you!"

Rody looked at Simao. His black cloak top was in tatters. It seemed that he had survived the Mystic Dragon Purge, although it was not an easy feat.

Simao held his spear and said, "Wasn't that the Mystic Dragon Purge?" He then narrowed his eyes and said in a soft voice. "How unfortunate... Your power is too weak!" He then pointed his spear at Rody and shouted, "I do not care how you learned the Mystic Dragon Purge! However, you are a dragon and also know how to use this attack! That means I will have to make sure you die here!"

"Die?" Rody frowned, and then he suddenly laughed coldly. "Those words sound so unfamiliar to me now..." His eyes gradually turned cold. "Don't think an old vampire like you could kill me! You tried to stop me from killing Bayan but what about now? He was caught in the crossfire in our fight and was mutilated. Now, not a single trace of him remained."

Simao gritted his teeth. "Although you can use the Mystic Dragon Purge, you are too weak! You cannot defeat my Dracula's Spear! I will kill you and feed your dragon's blood to my spear!"

After that, Simao threw the spear with all his might at Rody.

Rody quickly jumped away, and the spear plunged into the ground in a cloud of dust. A hole appeared in the ground where the spear had struck.

He looked at Rody trying to escape and laughed wildly. "Let's see how long you can run!"

Rody suddenly started to run and had already gone more than ten meters away from Simao.

Simao shouted, "Little dragon, are you trying to run? When did you dragons learn to flee?"

Rody was depressed. He looked at Simao with a strange glint in his eyes and said, "Old vampire! I have already killed the person I wanted to kill! Now I want to leave. Can you stop me? Besides that, we have created a huge ruckus in our fight! Those people of God will be here soon! Have you forgotten that this is the Imperial Capital of the Radiant Empire? Can your lousy spear kill all the Elders of God and the Pope?"

These words cut through Simao's hearts like a knife. When he heard the word 'God', his expression turned fierce and roared, "First, I will kill you! After that, I will kill the Pope!"

Rody laughed and said, "Looks like you are a fool! It seems that Bayan was right! You vampires are all brainless idiots!"

Rody looked coldly at Simao and then smiled and said, "Do you think that lousy spear is extraordinary? Look at my dragon tooth!"

Rody put two fingers in his mouth and put in a lot of energy into his fingers. He furrowed his eyebrows, and his mouth started to bleed. Suddenly, he pulled out a bloody tooth.

Rody then solemnly placed his tooth on his palm and silently cast an incantation... The tooth suddenly transformed into a sharp fang. The fang was covered by a black mist before it suddenly transformed into a large and sharp longsword.

Simao looked at it momentarily and said, "Dragon Fang sword? It is just a normal weapon! It may be a magical weapon to ordinary humans, but do you really think a sword made from a tooth can match my Dracula Spear?"

Rody's mouth still had traces of blood but he still smiled and said, "A normal Dragon Fang sword would obviously be unable to block

your spear. But why would I want to bother blocking?"

Rody held the Dragon Fang sword in his hands and took a deep breath...

His eyes had a glint of mockery as he whispered, "I had almost forgotten... Besides those strange things in my mind, as long as I hold a sword in my hands ... I am still a warrior"

The Dragon Fang sword slowly became transparent before a golden light enveloped the sword.

Simao had doubted his own eyes, but when he looked again, he saw that the light was indeed golden.

A dragon can use a human's fighting energy?

Shit. That is...the Holy Light!

The Dragon Fang sword in Rody's hands looked like a flaming, red hot piece of iron burning in a fierce fire. After that, Rody looked at Simao and shouted, "Die! Vampire!"

The longsword struck like lightning. A golden light had shot out in the shape of a huge half moon. A shrill sound rang out as the slash came down on Simao.

Simao growled and swung the Dracula's Spear in a circle. The large blade of light came down at him from above and knocked Simao back with an explosion. Simao's hands trembled as he gritted his teeth and shouted, "What kind of technique is this? Is it from the humans?"

Rody ignored him and smiled coldly. He slashed at Simao like lightning— left, right, and at different angles—and made seven to eight huge slashes using different techniques.

Momentarily, the seven to eight slashes emitted a golden light that turned the darkness before dawn into almost daylight!

Simao hastily defended. He swung the Dracula Spear in circles creating a black aural cloud around himself. However, Simao was

still unable to completely protect himself from the multi-directional attacks of the light blade.

A series of explosions continued, causing the dust to cover up Simao's figure. When the dust settled, Simao's cloak was extremely worn out and his mouth was full of fresh blood. His eyes were also now similarly red and looked like they were about to bleed.

The black flame around Simao had grown dimmer, and the Dracula Spear was also shaking like a leaf.

Rody laughed gloomily. "How is that? I had already seen this outcome much earlier. You said that I am too weak and could not kill you with the Mystic Dragon Purge. But what about you? Do you think that you are very strong? You are also unable to properly use the Dracula Spear."

As the two of them fought on, rocking the sky, they had not realized that a few figures watching them in the sky from a distance. These people wore either black or white robes. They held staffs in their hands and formed a semicircle as they floated in the air.

Besides these people, there was also a slender figure behind them with white hair fluttering in the wind. This man had his eyes focussed on the two fighters on the ground.

Suddenly, a man with a long wooden staff turned his white-haired head around to the old man behind him. He smiled and said, "Master Autumn. That man seemed like he had just used your Half Moon Slash!"

"Yes... That seems to be the case." Master Autumn's tone was very cold, but he still bowed slightly and said, "Yes, Your Highness the Pope."

Chapter 152: Master Autumn

Radiant Empire's Pope, Corsica VI, nodded but he still felt puzzled. "Strange... I had definitely felt a dragon here... When I arrived here, I could feel the dragon's aura becoming even more intense, but why can I only see this young man and that vampire?"

The Pope was thinking about it as he slowly said, "This youngster is obviously a human... I cannot feel any dragon aura in him... Besides that, he is using a human warrior's fighting energy." He then looked at Master Autumn and said, "Master Autumn. You are a warrior. You should be able to see things clearer than me."

Master Autumn gave a wry smile and bowed. "Pope. Without a doubt, this man is using fighting energy. Based on his strength, he is almost able to comprehend 'Holy Light' energy. He is only slightly weaker compared to a Sacred Swordsman. I am also surprised as to when the Radiant Empire trained such a person."

However, Corsica VI frowned and shook his head. "But... What about the dragon aura? There should have been a dragon..."

The Pope was already speaking to himself and did not notice Master Autumn showing a wry smile.

Rody and the vampire had battled each other and created such a big uproar in the middle of the Imperial Capital. As a result, the entire Imperial Capital was alarmed.

When Pope Corsica VI and the other bishops arrived, they were just in time to see Rody use the warrior's basic fighting energy to fight against the vampire. However, they did not see Rody use the Mystic Dragon's power. They were naturally puzzled.

However, Master Autumn had arrived earlier than them. He was early enough to see Rody transform his tooth into a sword. The significance of this act surprised Master Autumn, and he seemed to have noticed something.

Corsica VI frowned even more. The series of events that night had made him impatient. Earlier, a dragon aura had appeared outside the city. It was clear that there was a dragon on the Radiant Continent. Did the dragons really have the audacity to violate the agreement from thousands of years ago? Or perhaps that agreement was a mere legend.

Roma was dispatched but has not returned. At first, I intended to dispatch more people, but then the dragon had suddenly appeared again inside the city.

There was also an explosion and an earthquake. This created a huge commotion in the Imperial Capital. This is also the Imperial Family's home!

The Imperial Family and the God's religion had a close relationship. They both prospered together and suffered losses together. Now that their own home was messed up, even the people from the Northern Continent would laugh at them.

What made Corsica VI even angrier was that there was even a high ranked vampire when he arrived.

The strength of the vampire made the Pope extremely surprised. The vampire had obviously achieved a top-rank level amongst the vampires. Besides that, the vampire was also carrying the vampire's legendary and most powerful weapon, the Dracula Spear.

This was the legendary demon weapon that was once used to injure the Gods!

Although the vampire was very powerful, the Pope was sure that he would be able to defeat the vampire. After all, the Pope had brought along one of the most powerful magician, who was also a Bishop, with him.

However, the Dracula Spear also made the Pope feel disturbed.

This was something the world had not seen for hundreds of

years. It was something that only existed in legends.

Rody's fighting energy became more intense, even monstrous, as he continuously swung the magnificent Half Moon Slash. Countless golden lights rapidly smashed into Simao. The place Simao stood at now had a huge, deep hole, and he had been completely suppressed. Now, the only thing left that he could rely on was the Dracula Spear that he used to bitterly defend.

Shit! Is this kid's strength inexhaustible?

Simao had been fighting intensely for a long time. Besides that, he had also endured the Mystic Dragon Purge earlier. Simao had already used up too much power. Although he had impaled his opponent with the spear, his opponent did not even seem to weaken. On the other hand, his opponent was becoming even more powerful and more imposing.

Can a human's fighting energy be used like this?

Master Autumn was also seriously watching the fight from mid-air. He had been counting the number of times Rody had used the Half Moon Slash. At that moment, Rody had already used the Half Moon Slash over thirty times.

This is not possible! Where did he get all his power from?

If he was that powerful, he should have broken through to the next level and already obtained Domain Force. However, it is obvious that he has not learned Domain Force. I would notice if he knew how to use Domain Force!

Master Autumn then looked at Corsica VI and stopped thinking about it. Ah, it is better not to think too much in front of these people. It is said that the Pope knows how to read minds. Only God knows if that is true.

"Not bad." Corsica VI watched the vampire getting suppressed. The vampire was completely exhausted, and the black flame around his body had turned dim. The Pope then give a meaningful

look to the other Bishops.

Rody felt an unparalleled happiness within. He himself could not remember how many times he had used the Half Moon Slash just now.

He had only felt this way once before, when he had used the life-saving limit crystal Old Mark gave him. Right now, his body's fighting energy once again felt bottomless. When he used it, he would feel exhausted for only a moment, after which he would immediately feel energy charging into his entire body.

It was as if after a force charged into his body, it was immediately converted into fighting energy.

Wait. Conversion?

Rody finally faintly understood. This was the conversion that Andy had talked about.

If he were to think of himself as the lightsaber, the Mystic Dragon would be the energy converting crystal.

In other words, the Mystic Dragon's power was being converted into fighting energy.

When Rody realized this, he felt emotional and excited but could not control himself and raised his head to howl..

Suddenly, the howl was interrupted. A majestic and holy chanting came from the sky. The words in that chanting sounded like a hymn and seemed to bear some kind of netherworldly celestial sound.

A few religious elders wearing the robes of God's religion slowly descended from the sky. All of them held a staff each and seemed to surround Simao. The last person was a white robed old man that emerged from them. His staff had a crystal the size of a chicken egg. That crystal was different compared to normal magic crystals. It emitted a gentle yet eye-catching radiance.

"People from God's religion!" Rody slowly lowered his sword and vigilantly looked at the bishops. Simao turned pale and pointed his spear at the Pope, Corsica VI.

"Looks like it is you hypocrites!" Simao fiercely looked at them and saw that they were all quite close and had surrounded him. He realised their intentions and coldly mocked them, "What's going on? Are you trying to take advantage of the current situation?"

Rody coldly raised his eyebrows and also commented. "People from God's religion? Looks like you guys have also arrived!" Rody was about to raise his sword when he heard a voice behind him. "Young man. I suggest you better not move."

The voice sounded extremely calm and devoid of aggression. However, Rody immediately felt a sharp pain on his back, as if someone had placed a heavy sword against his back.

This person could condense his killing intent into forms?

Rody turned around to see the figure behind him and saw his white hair fluttering in the air...

"Master Autumn?" Rody was startled. His vigilance immediately disappeared and was replaced with a genuine smile. "It's you!"

Rody's tone of voice was filled with a bit of respect and admiration.

Master Autumn frowned. "You know me?"

Rody returned with a wry smile and replied, "Master Autumn. I will not forget that you instructed me once."

Master Autumn thought to himself for a moment as he looked at Rody's face. Finally, he showed a surprised expression.

He remembered meeting with Rody. In fact, he had met with Rody more than once.

Master Autumn had instructed Rody twice when Rody had just entered the Tulip Family's mansion. The first time, Master

Autumn had broken Rody's sword into several pieces and taught him about secret of sword power. At that time, Rody still had a Yin Yang face.

The second time, Rody was wearing a silver mask. At that time, Master Autumn had demonstrated to him the Half Moon Slash and explained to him the principle of 'real power'. He also helped Rody by giving him a seed of power. That seed was filled with fighting energy and real power. With this seed, Rody's progress became fast and scary.

Old Mark had told Rody that this kind of power required many years of practice.

When Rody started learning how to use the sword, Master Autumn had always been his idol. For a teenager, who else could be more respected compared to his idol? Besides that, his idol had also sincerely instructed him.

"So, it was you..." Master Autumn gazed in surprise. "You actually managed to become so powerful in just a short time... Aren't you supposed to be Miss Nicole's guard?"

"Guard?" Rody froze for a moment and then gave a wry smile. "I am no longer someone from the Tulip Family."

Rody had spoken calmly but his words were filled with a profound meaning.

Master Autumn could not understand this meaning, but he still nodded and whispered, "If there is anything else to say, we will speak later. Step back. The people of the religion are not here for you. They are here for the vampire... and also the dragon."

"Dragon?"

"Yes." Master Autumn said, "Have you seen a dragon here? There was a dragon's aura here earlier."

Rody's mind started to think, and he looked at his own body. Right now, he did not have a black aura and only had the golden

fighting energy around him.

"No." Rody replied calmly. "I did not see any dragon."

Rody's hostility had totally disappeared as he looked at the person he respected and calmly stood beside him. Master Autumn then saw Rody's Dragon Fang sword and suddenly asked, "How did you create this sword?"

Rody just smiled and did not reply.

Although he was much stronger right now, his mind was still sober. He had fought for an entire night, but he could not defeat the old vampire. Now that he was looking at a group of Elders from the God's religion, it would be better not to reveal his identity. He had also already petrified one of their Elders. It was better to stay out of trouble.

There was enmity between him and the vampires, as well as Bayan. That was why he was willing to fight recklessly against them. However, he did not have any grudge against the people from God's religion.

Moreover, Master Autumn was standing right beside himself. In the final analysis, Rody did not want to fight against his idol.

Besides that, Rody did not lie when he said he did not see the dragon. He did not consider himself a dragon. He also did not believe that converting a dragon would allow him to call himself a dragon.

Master Autumn knew that Rody did not give him an answer, but he did not mind. After all, it was not necessary for the others to tell him their own secrets. At the moment, his attention was at the religious Elders and the surrounded vampire.

Several bishops raised their staff and then Corsica VI cried out in a majestic voice, "Vampire! Surrender and accept God's judgement!"

Rody chuckled when he heard the word 'judgement'. He

remembered petrifying that other Elder after being agitated and asked himself if he had been overly ruthless.

Rody shook his head and felt at a loss. He felt that his emotions that night were too strange. He would suddenly feel excited, calm or even violent. It was as if his emotions were being thrown around. His mind also felt like it was being split up.

"What are they waiting for? Why haven't they attacked?" Rody asked coldly. "I want to see if they could defeat the old vampire."

Master Autumn glanced at Rody and replied, "They are delaying, waiting for the sky to turn bright."

"They are waiting for the sky to turn bright?"

Master Autumn nodded and explained, "A vampire is weaker during the daytime. On the other hand, the religion's light spell would be enhanced. They have a much better edge that way."

"Hmph. What a bunch of despicable shams," Rody said in disdain.

Master Autumn glanced at Rody again and unexpectedly mocked in a soft voice, "I agree."

Chapter 153: Sacred Swordsman

"Stand behind me," Master Autumn suddenly whispered. He then stepped forward and firmly stood in front of Rody. "They are going to attack... Be careful of the Pope."

Rody raised his eyebrows and arrogantly asked, "What is there to be afraid of? They are just some quacks."

Master Autumn showed a profound smile and replied, "What is there to be afraid of? Naturally, the answer is to be afraid of trouble. Do you want them to see the dragon on your chest? Or perhaps you want to get rid of all those in the God's religion."

Rody's expression changed as he was caught red-handed. After all, he had just said that he did not see the dragon.

Master Autumn laughed gently but his expression did not change. "Alright, we will speak more later. However, you better be careful... A dragon tattoo is rare on the Radiant continent."

After that, Master Autumn took off his robe and gave it to Rody.

Master Autumn was wearing a very ordinary warrior's clothing. However, these simple clothes made him look tall and upright. More importantly, after Master Autumn took off his shirt, his body looked sharp, like a blade out of its sheath.

The originally calm and quiet Master Autumn had transformed so much that Rody was shocked.

As the two whispered to each other, the eastern side of the sky slowly turned bright. Patches of red cloud could be seen, and the sun looked like it was about to rise.

Corsica VI then whispered, "Accept God's judgement!"

He raised the staff in his hands. At the same time, the other Elders took one step forward and closed in on Simao from five different directions.

"Pay attention. This is the 'Radiant Binding Array'." Master Autumn sighed. "It is not every day that you get to see five Elder magicians working together to use this method."

Rody put on the robes Master Autumn had given him before asking, "What about it? This formation will only trap the vampire. Does this stupid Pope think this formation is effective against the Dracula Spear? What a joke..." Rody stopped himself in time. He almost stated that even the Mystic Dragon's Purge was unable to kill Simao.

A white and holy light diffused from the ground. Simao was in the middle of the pentagram, and black smoke emitted from his feet. He started to scream.

The five Elders chanted at the same time. The pentagram also grew smaller, as if it was wrapping up Simao. Simao screamed as he thrust the Dracula Spear into the ground. After that, something that was blood-red in color emitted from his body and danced around him. It seemed to be scarlet blood.

The surrounding space seemed to tremble. The red and the white mists trembled as they continued to collide against each other. At the same time, the expression of the five Elders grew more serious and some started to sweat on their foreheads.

Master Autumn frowned. "Is a Prince ranked vampire really so powerful? He can't even be defeated by five Bishops?"

Rody lightly replied, "That Prince ranked vampire himself is nothing much. It is the artifact in his hands that is too powerful... If he did not have that spear, he would have been turned to ashes a long time ago."

Master Autumn turned his head around to look at Rody and said, "I didn't think you'd actually know about these things."

Rody shook his head but did not say anything.

"Wait, the Pope has not yet acted." Master Autumn smile faintly.

Rody then looked at Master Autumn and suddenly asked, "Do you come here tonight for the dragon... For me, right? Do you want to capture me? Or..."

Master Autumn shook his head and gave a complicated expression. "I am just a palace warrior. My duty is to protect the Empire and ensure His Majesty's safety. The other matters are not within my jurisdiction. As for the people of God and the vampires... Even the Pope have already appeared. They do not need to use people like me."

Sure enough, the moment Master Autumn finished speaking, the Pope, Corsica VI started to act.

However, the old man then looked at Master Autumn from afar and said loudly, "Master Autumn, the vampire is wreaking havoc within the Empire. Are you just going to watch from the side?"

Hearing that, Master Autumn pursed his lips and complained softly in a voice only Rody could hear. "Old fox! He is always trying to test me!"

Master Autumn smiled and then replied to the Pope. "Your Highness and the other Bishops are already here. Why do I need to act?"

Corsica VI gave a solemn expression and loudly said, "This vampire is an embodiment of evil. A few Bishops would not be enough to defeat him! We must eliminate him, together! If this high ranked vampire escapes, who knows how many lives would be endangered!"

Master Autumn grunted coldly and then muttered something under his breath. After that, he loudly said, "I do not dare defy Your Highness' words."

Master Autumn then took a step forward. Rody could immediately sense the impact of this one step.

An extraordinary surge of pressure was emitted by Master

Autumn's body. It was as awe inspiring as if God had just dropped his sword onto the human world.

There was a kind of quiet yet penetrating chill. It was like the chill that comes with fine goosebumps from pinpricks on your skin.

Simao who was still standing in the pentagram formation felt the situation getting bad. He immediately looked towards Master Autumn and suddenly shouted, "Master Autumn, are you going to be shameless like these god's people as well?"

"Do not attack." After Master Autumn said that, he slowly walked forward.

As Master Autumn's hands were empty, Rody suddenly whispered, "Use my sword."

Master Autumn did not turn around and simply replied, "No need."

The Elders were already sweating as the sun rose. The red fog protecting Simao trembled and seemed to have turned a bit faint. However, Simao firmly clenched his spear and the legendary artifact rang softly. Instead of diminishing, the fog then pushed away the pentagram.

The Bishops stepped back at the same time. Only the Pope stood calmly at a distance. It was difficult to see what was on the Pope's mind.

Master Autumn calmly walked forward, step by step. He did not stop even when he reached the pentagram made by the the people of God and casually stepped inside. There was a bang, and it seemed like a silver firework exploded. Master Autumn had stepped into and broken the 'Radiant Binding Array'.

"You!"

One of the Elders became angry and was about to shout. However, the Pope, Corsica VI coldly glanced at him.

Master Autumn looked calm and without turning his head, he simply replied, "When I am fighting, I do not need help."

Master Autumn finally stretched out his hand and a flame-like fighting energy appeared. The light in his hand then condensed and transformed into a shape that looked like a sword.

Form Condensation!

Master Autumn had actually reached the rank of a Sacred Swordsman.

The surrounding Elders all started whispering to one another. Master Autumn had reached the rank of a Sacred Swordsman but nobody had ever seen him fight. The very moment he started to act, he had confirmed all the speculations of his strength. Even Rody raised his eyebrows.

The first warrior in the Empire was well deserving of his reputation.

Nobody noticed that the Pope Corsica VI showed an expression of relief.

"He is just a Sacred Swordsman."

Simao laughed bitterly and said, "Master Autumn, do you think that your fighting energy is able to compete with my spear? Just now, that kid's dragon..."

Simao wanted to continue but Master Autumn immediately interrupted him and shouted, "It's meaningless to say too much. Fight!"

The lightsaber in his hand gleamed as he gently lashed out.

He seemed aloof and casual. It did not seem significant. He had assembled an unparalleled fighting energy that only a warrior at the apex could do. He had then also created a fighting energy lightsaber. Everybody expected him to use a very strong, earth-shattering attack next. However, Master Autumn had just casually

lashed out.

"Hm?" Everybody was surprised.

Only Rody's eyes flashed as if he had come to a realization.

Simao's heart stopped. His opponent's underwhelming attack suddenly made him feel powerless. It was as if the dazzling blade was becoming larger and larger such that he could neither block nor dodge.

The attack had seemingly cut off all of his escape route. The only way out was to fight it head-on, resolutely.

Simao instinctively moved his spear to clash against the sword. What condensed fighting energy sword... The demon weapon, Dracula Spear, would surely break it.

Finally, when Master Autumn lightsaber clashed against Simao's spear, there was an immediate sound of something breaking. The black fog from the Dracula's spear was swallowed up by the flaming sword. The flaming sword then scattered.

No way? That's it?

Before the people could process what happened, Simao screamed. A strong and slender hand then firmly grabbed the spear.

Master Autumn gave a mocking gaze as Simao turned cold in fear.

Simao used both his hands to grab that spear from his opponent who held it with just one hand. But his body turned stiff. It was as if there were invisible chains that were binding him.

He blurted out. "Impossible. You..."

Master Autumn gazed murderously. He then suddenly kicked Simao away. Simao flew away and crashed into the ground. After that, he looked at Master Autumn in surprise. Master Autumn continued to hold the spear and stared at Simao with a mocking expression. Simao was so surprised that his eyes had almost rolled

out.

How did he do that?

What did he do?

Why couldn't I move my body at that moment? Why do I feel like all my strength is being drained?

Ignoring the surprised expressions of the Bishops, Master Autumn weighed the Dracula Spear in his hands. His mouth moved to quietly speak.

Simao immediately heard a subtle voice in his ear.

"Sorry. You know too much. I cannot let you live."

After that, Master Autumn raised his hand and threw the spear. The spear flew like a black light and mercilessly impaled Simao in the chest, nailing him to the ground.

Simao screamed. His body burned up immediately as he was engulfed by a black flame. Within a short moment, all that was left were only the ashes and the black Dracula Spear that had been stuck in the ground.

Master Autumn sighed softly and turned towards the Pope. "Your Highness. I have killed the vampire."

The Pope was stunned and had a complicated expression for a long time. He finally commented bitterly, "As expected from a Sacred Swordsman. Your reputation is well deserved."

Master Autumn nodded. He went to Rody's side without looking at the other Bishops and whispered. "Let's go. Quickly!"

Seeing that Master Autumn had started to pull away the young man, the Pope frowned and said, "Master Autumn. This young man..."

Master Autumn stopped and looked at the Pope. He lightly replied. "I only recognized him after he stood beside me. He is one of my old friends. I taught him a little when he was much younger.

The Half Moon Slash was also something I taught him. I just could not recognize him earlier."

After that, Master Autumn looked at Rody and said, "You fought alone bravely against this sinister enemy. Very good! His Majesty will definitely reward you!"

When Master Autumn spoke these words, even the Pope could not say anything else. A single person ran out alone to fight against the vampire. What else could they say? Although Master Autumn had called the Pope 'Your Highness', the Pope was just a religious leader while Master Autumn was a warrior of the palace. He did not answer to the Pope. He may show respect but he did not take orders from the Pope.

What the Pope did not know was that the person Master Autumn had referred to as 'sinister enemy' was not the vampire.

Rody looked at the rubble of the Prince's castle behind him. He then smiled and left with Master Autumn.

Chapter 154: The True Meaning of Swordsmanship

A few of the Bishops and Elders laughed as they praised, "We did not expect that the warrior of the Imperial Family was truly so powerful. It seems that our Radiant Empire finally has a new Sacred Swordsman! There is now another fighter who defends the dignity of the True God in his sanctuary. These heathens in the north better be careful! Our strength will be greatly increased in the next holy war."

The Pope remained calm as he listened to the praises of the others. There was not a trace of admiration, and he laughed bitterly. "Fighter of God... He might be powerful, but is he really a pious believer? Moreover, is he really just a simple Sacred Swordsman?"

The Pope then looked at the Dracula Spear on the ground and raised his eyebrows. Whatever the case, we have killed a vampire prince and obtained a legendary artifact. This is a happy outcome.

Half the streets outside Prince Barond's mansion were torn apart. In addition to that, the mansion was almost razed to the ground. The outer walls were already destroyed. Even half of the sturdy castle was destroyed and the remaining half was crumbling. Bayan and hundreds of his private warriors were either dead or scattered everywhere. The other Imperial nobles' luxurious mansions that were near the Prince's palace were also affected. Many buildings collapsed and even the walls were destroyed. Some of the rock-slabs in the half of the street nearest to the fighting site had been lifted off the ground.

Rody and Master Autumn walked out and saw that several teams of security soldiers in the Imperial Capital had already arrived. They had arrived a little bit late, and at that moment, the place was in a mess.

The leader of the public security soldiers was deathly pale. The last time, there was an assassination attempt on the Duke of the Tulip Family, which had almost forced him to commit suicide. Finally, he almost had to turn over the entire Imperial Capital before managed to solve that crisis. The current situation was worse. The whole Prince Barond's mansion had already turned into scorched earth, and that actually happen inside the Imperial Capital. From the looks of it, there were not many still left alive.

A group of low ranked magicians of God's religion were on guard outside. They told him that the Pope and several Bishops were in that area subduing demons. The leader of the security soldiers then started to silently pray. He prayed for the Prince to be safe. Otherwise, as the one in charge of public security, he would have no choice but to slit his own throat.

As the man was sweating, he saw Master Autumn walking towards him from the end of the street. The leader of the security soldiers rushed forward as if he saw his savior and clung to Master Autumn.

Master Autumn looked at him and whispered, "The Pope is in there. A vampire was wreaking havoc in there and had been killed. You do not have to worry about this matter. It is not your responsibility."

The man looked relieved but then Master Autumn's following words once again made him turn pale.

Master Autumn had added, "However, the Prince's son, Young Master Bayan had died for the nation."

These words made the man almost drop on the ground immediately. His Majesty the Emperor's nephew is dead? When His Majesty becomes angry, would I, the person in charge of the Empire's safety, still be able to live?

Master Autumn saw that the man had turned pale and sighed. He then laughed and said, "You don't need to be afraid. In this matter,

His Majesty will not be angry. In fact, he would be quite happy."

After that, Master Autumn left behind the baffled leader of the security soldiers and continued on with Rody. That man was still confused as he thought to himself. Isn't Young Master Bayan His Majesty's blood nephew? Why would His Majesty be happy about his death?"

This kind of higher rank stuff was not something a mere low rank leader of the security soldiers could understand.

Master Autumn's words were later confirmed when His Majesty did not pursue the leader of the security soldiers. Instead, a written commendation was given and praised the man for handling the matter properly and for his meritorious service. The confused leader of the security soldiers then thought to himself, When I was studying in the Imperial Academy, my teacher had told me that to be close to the Emperor is to be close to a tiger. These words are true. The Emperor's actions are hard to understand.

Naturally, that is another story.

Rody followed Master Autumn as the sky turned brighter. Outside of the residence of the Imperial Nobles, the other people on the streets were continuing their days normally. They heard that there was an earthquake and lightning strike the night before. When they heard the news that the noble mansions were destroyed, they felt happy. Hmph. Let's see if they can still be arrogant! This is a joyous occasion.

The people in the streets and the alleys continued to gossip. The only difference was that there were more security soldiers than usual.

Now that the sky was bright, they could no longer just fly around. Rody simply followed Master Autumn all the way out of the city to the outskirts of the Imperial Capital.

They then stopped in front of a small house outside of the city.

"This is my home." Master Autumn spoke calmly. "It is my former home."

They walked into the courtyard and found it depressing and rundown. The ground was filled with fallen leaves and looked as if nobody had been there for a long time. Master Autumn lightly said, "Now, I mostly live inside the palace. I don't come here as often as before. However, this place is quiet. It is safe here..." Master Autumn suddenly looked sharp and said slowly, "... Duke of the Tulip Family."

Rody was startled. His expression immediately changed as he stepped back. He then looked at Master Autumn in surprise.

"Is it strange?" Master Autumn gave a wry smile. "At first, I thought it was strange. Why did the talentless Seth suddenly become an invincible warrior in the Northwest and the new Duke of the Tulip Family? When I saw you tonight and your swordsmanship, I remembered that Nicole had asked me to teach you. I would be an idiot if I still could not figure it out by then."

"Are you so sure of this with just that information?" Rody asked vigilantly.

Master Autumn gave a bitter laugh and said, "At first, I could not confirm it. However, I noticed something."

"What is it?"

"Do you remember the assessment to inherit the title? I was there as His Majesty's guard, but I was hidden in the dark. At that time, I was wondering why the fighting energy from your body was so familiar. At that time, I could not figure it out, but now I could understand it. This is because your body's fighting energy was cultivated from the seed of power that I gave you." Master Autumn laughed calmly as he reassured Rody. "Do not worry. I will not harm you."

Rody looked at Master Autumn's calm expression and gained a

sense of trust. He then relaxed and stopped clenching his fist.

Master Autumn then smiled and asked. "What is with the dragon on your body?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "That is a long story... I... "

Master Autumn waved his hand and lightly said, "I am not questioning you. You do not have to give me an answer. In fact, I liked you since the first time I saw you. You are different from the other young warriors I have met. You are very different. You were like me when I was younger."

Master Autumn paused for a while and then spoke in a pleasant manner, "You are very strong right now. This makes me happy. " He gradually became serious and said, "However, you should not have created such a ruckus in the Imperial Capital. This is the core of the Empire. Creating such a ruckus here would give you a lot of trouble."

Rody's became more stubborn. He raised his eyebrow and shouted, "Why not? I want to make a lot of trouble and destroy those scoundrels!" Rody paused for a moment and then he explained what happened that night to Master Autumn.

Master Autumn calmly listened to Rody. Even when he heard the news of Jojo's death, he only raised his eyebrows without interrupting Rody.

"Is that why you recklessly created havoc?" Master Autumn shook his head when Rody had finished his story. "You are still too young. There are a lot of things that cannot be solved with just the drive to do so. I was like you when I was younger. I had thought that I could solve anything with my sword. However, this is not the case in reality."

He then showed a bleak expression and laughed hesitantly. "I cannot explain to you much about this... I... do not have much time left here." There was a moment of silence before he smiled at

Rody. He was like a father watching over his stubborn son as he asked softly, "Let me ask you. You had returned from the South for Miss Nicole. However, what do you think would be the consequences of your rash actions?"

Rody froze for a moment and did not speak.

Master Autumn continued, "Miss Nicole placed a lot of importance into the family. Otherwise, she would not have made you pretend to be Seth and to revive her family's prestige. In fact, this was a mistake. For your sake, Miss Nicole refused the Emperor's proposal. This is already a difficult matter. If she really only wanted to revive her family's prestige, she would have already accepted his proposal. However, why did she not send word to you? This is because she was afraid that you would go back to the Imperial Capital and make the Emperor anxious. What do you think the consequences of your actions would be? What are the charges for generals that returned to the Imperial Capital without the Emperor's orders? This was an iron-cast law that has been in place since Abbas the Great's rule!"

"Once you have created such a ruckus, you are no longer the Duke of the Tulip Family. You threw away that identity to be with Miss Nicole. That is a good thing. But what do you think would happen after that? Will you elope with Miss Nicole? Will you allow the Tulip Family's name to fall?"

When he saw that Rody did not speak, Master Autumn raised his eyebrows and suddenly shouted, "You think of getting rid of your identity as the Duke so that you could be with Miss Nicole? Have you thought about how you are going to be with Miss Nicole? Exile to a distant place? You are wrong."

Master Autumn then looked straight at Rody and lowered his voice. "You are not willing to be the Duke of the Tulip Family, but does that mean you cannot be Duke Rody? You do not want to be the Commander of the Tulip Family but does that mean you cannot be Commander Rody? You are still you, but that does not

mean you cannot raise a different banner for the Empire besides the banner of the Tulip Family."

Rody was shocked and his eyes turned bright

Raise a new banner? That's it!

If Rody were to take Nicole and leave, would Nicole be willing to give up on the Tulip Family cause? She may not be willing to watch her family with centuries of reputation collapse.

Even for Rody himself. Would he leave Sieg? Leave Gordon? Leave the people that have fought with him on the battlefield or died for him?

"You do not have to see Nicole right now," Master Autumn whispered. "Stay here for the next two days. I will teach you some things."

"You will teach me?" Rody eyes glinted with excitement. "Are you saying... you would accept me as your apprentice?"

In the end, Rody was still Rody. No matter how powerful he became, he was still a simple person at heart.

To become the apprentice of the strongest warrior in the Empire! To become Master Autumn's apprentice!

There were many young warriors in the Empire that dreamt of this. Even Rody himself dreamt of becoming Master Autumn's apprentice when he was still a student in the Imperial Academy.

Master Autumn saw the vigor in Rody's eyes and shook his head. He then said softly, "No. You will not be my apprentice. Your current strength is almost at the rank of a Sacred Swordsman. What qualifications do I have to be your teacher?" Master Autumn laughed as if he was very pleased. "When I was younger, the Duke of the Tulip Family had helped me. I have said it before that if I were to have an apprentice, I would only accept his son. Unfortunately, Seth has no interest in swordsmanship."

Master Autumn saw Rody's disappointed look and gave a wry smile. "I can give you some pointers. I cannot help you improve your power but rather, your swordplay."

"Swordplay?" Rody was at a loss.

In fact, Rody was proud of his own swordsmanship. He had the most solid swordsmanship when compared with the other students in the Imperial Academy. Even after his strength increased, Instructor Carter from the Tulip Family had also praised his swordsmanship. His fighting energy and all of his powers were acquired by good fortune. It was not gained from his own efforts. On the other hand, his swordsmanship was entirely his own effort."

Master Autumn saw that Rody was at a loss and continued, "The sword is not as simple as you imagine it to be. During those years, if it was not because of swordsmanship, I would... Sigh..."

Master Autumn suddenly sighed softly. He gazed at the rundown courtyard with apathetic eyes and said, "Just now I told you not to create a fuss for Miss Nicole and not to be too impulsive. In fact, I really admire your courage. Unfortunately, I did not have your courage during those years."

His eyes glinted as if he was lost in the past.

"I said you cannot elope with her... Haha... Elope is such a heavy word. If only I could elope with her. If only we could just drop everything."

Finally, Master Autumn returned and gave a Rody a profound look. "Make great efforts. Do not repeat my mistake."

Master Autumn's sad gaze also made Rody tremble. It seemed that although Master Autumn was famous, he had a sad past.

Who was the person that made Master Autumn so heartbroken?

"Curious?" Master Autumn smiled. "These are all things that happened when I was younger..." Master Autumn lightly said, "I

was like you when I was younger. While my swordsmanship was not that good, I fell in love with a noble girl. Later... Well, it was never possible for her to marry a civilian warrior like me... In the end, she married..." At this point, Master Autumn shook his head and cleared the thoughts from his mind.

Master Autumn then walked slowly to a tree. He then looked back and asked, "In your heart, what is the sword?"

Rody thought for a moment and answered, "It is power! It is the weapon to destroy my enemies!"

Master Autumn shook his head and laughed. "I asked you what is the sword, not what weapons are for. Any weapon could turn into power to destroy the enemy. But, in your heart, what is the sword?"

Master Autumn spoke seriously when he saw Rody was at a loss. "Your biggest flaw is that the Empire has corrupted your swordsmanship training! In my opinion, the swordsmanship used by the majority of the warriors in the Empire is wrong! They use the sword to slash and chop... Hmph. It is just relying on brute force. I would not be able to see the difference even if you exchanged their swords with sticks."

Rody could not help but laugh. "What else could you do with a sword if you do not use it to slash?"

Master Autumn replied, "It is not that slashing is wrong... but swords are not used like that."

He then closed his eyes and seriously said, "The sword is a noble weapon. It is more handy than spears, more flashy than daggers, more spirited than axes. It has more techniques compared to scimitars! However, the Empire's swordsmanship training had turned sword into a weapon without depth. In their hands, a sword is used to sweep like a spear, stab like a dagger, chop like an axe, or slash like a scimitar. Hmph. Do you call these swords?"

Master Autumn then opened his eyes and looked at Rody. He then said in a serious tone, "The sword is not trained but 'cultivated'".

Master Autumn then pointed and lightly said, "[I will teach you 'Sword Cultivation'.](#)"

His voice was cold as he continued, "I stopped using the sword when I reached forty years old. Do you want to know why?" Master Autumn then laughed lightly. "That is because the sword is me, and I am a sword." (Author's Note : Sorry. I borrowed this line from Gu Long's words. This is because [Ximen Chui Xue](#) is my favorite Wuxia character.)

"Do you see these falling leaves? They are fluttering effortlessly. If you were to punch it, chop it or sweep at them, they would just shake and flutter further away."

Master Autumn then closed his eyes. His finger then made a gentle sliding motion. A sharp sword qi appeared in mid-air. This qi did not feel violent or earth-shattering. but seemed to slice a slowly falling leaf into two.

After the qi disappeared, an atmosphere of desolation set in. It seemed that in its wake, the wind stopped and flowers disappear; time and tide stood still, and sword and passion were dead.

"Transmitting my anger and vigor through my fingers, I wield the sword and thrust it at the warmth of spring, the uprightness of summer, the charm of autumn, and the quiet elegance of winter."

These were the words of the Empire's greatest warrior.

以身修劍 Yi Shen Xiu Jian. 'By means of' 'structure.' 'build/repair' 'sword' I just named it 'Create Sword' because that is what it does literally.

Gu Long is a martial arts author and Ximen Chui Xue is a character from one of his story, 'Legend of Lu Xiao Feng'.

Chapter 155: Crafty Plots

The Imperial Capital was in chaos for a few days. Besides the news of the death of the Emperor's nephew, there was another news that made the Emperor furious. The Emperor was originally in a fairly good mood, but he was badly affected after hearing the news. The news was that the Empire's most famous beautiful woman and the sister of the Empress, Miss Jojo, had gone missing.

After many rounds of investigations, they finally found that Miss Jojo had left the city with some guards on the night just before the surprise attack at the Prince's residence. She was supposed to leave the city for her family residence outside the city. However, there was no news after she had left the city.

The guards at the city gates had reported that they saw Miss Jojo's carriage leaving that evening. However, they did not see her return. Those at Miss Jojo's small family residence also said that Miss Jojo had never returned to the residence.

So, Miss Jojo and her team of guards had just disappeared into thin air.

The leader of the security soldiers had just received two orders from the Emperor. The first one was a commendation that praised his good work for dealing with the aftermath of the attack at the Prince's residence. The second order was for these soldiers to immediately search for Miss Jojo's whereabouts.

Besides that, the Emperor had also dispatched thousands of the Imperial cavalymen out of the Imperial Capital to search for Miss Jojo in all directions. It was said that even the personal guards of the Imperial Family comprising high ranked magicians and warriors were also dispatched to look for Miss Jojo.

Master Autumn stayed silent as he watched these people busy themselves. He already knew that Jojo was dead. Her body was also hidden by Rody. However, he did not know where Rody hid

the body. Rody had never told him, and he never thought of asking.

After the uproar, His Majesty the Emperor had temporarily put aside his marriage with Miss Nicole of the Tulip Family. Instead, almost the entire Imperial Capital was turned upside down. Naturally, this was not because of Bayan's death. Bayan's death was not exactly good news for the Emperor. Although Prince Barond was lucky enough to escape, he no longer entered the Imperial Palace. Instead, he left the Imperial Capital to hide in one of his private residences on the outskirts of the city.

The nobles that knew about the secret fight for the throne and had originally taken Prince Barond's side now all tried to express their loyalties to the Emperor. They did that to protect themselves. However, Abbas XI completely ignored them. The Emperor's eyes were red as he continued to wait for Miss Jojo to return.

"The Emperor is a fool."

In a certain corner of a certain room in the Imperial Capital, Seth was carrying a silver glass. He laughed as he slowly said, "Although I am not too sure who destroyed the Prince's residence, but that fellow Rody had suddenly disappeared. This incident is most likely related to him."

Mark was lazily leaning on a chair as if his entire body was without energy. He shook the empty bottle in his hand and lightly said, "The Emperor has always been an idiot, but what is the point of saying this?"

Seth's handsome face showed a strange expression. "If I were the Emperor, this would be the best time to rebuild my influence and uproot the opposition! The Prince's residence had been destroyed by someone, and the biggest gain for the Emperor is Bayan's death! The Emperor's weakness right now is that he does not have an heir. Bayan is a descendant of royal blood. His father is also one of the late Emperor's son. If the Emperor still does not have a son in

the future, the throne would belong to Bayan. The Emperor would not be able to do anything, even if he was unwilling. Prince Barond's efforts in arrogantly winning over the support of the nobles in the Imperial Capital meant that he knew the Emperor's weakness!"

Mark coldly replied, "In my opinion, that Prince Barond has an intellectual problem. Since the throne would belong to his son in the future, what is the point of all the petty tricks? Aren't they unnecessary?"

Seth sighed and shook his head. "It was not unnecessary at all!" He exposed a cold smile. "When has there never been killing in the battle for the throne? His Majesty the Emperor is reluctant in giving up the throne to others. Naturally, that means he also wants an heir to inherit the throne. Unfortunately, he has no son. That was why he had to suppress the Prince and his faction. Sigh..." Seth sighed. "Prince Barond also had no choice but to desperately expand his own strength. The Emperor was like a thorn to both Prince Barond and his son. He also knew that the Emperor was focussed on getting rid of the Tulip Family and had not noticed their actions. Prince Barond was more intelligent than the Emperor! He made good use of time to gain more influence in the Imperial Capital, so that he would be strong enough to fight against the Emperor in the future."

Old Mark sighed again. He knew that the bottle in his hand was empty but he could not help but bring the bottle to his mouth.

Seth's gaze looked a bit complicated. "What a pity. All the people I meet are idiots. The Emperor is a fool. He is the idiot amongst idiots. He had the Tulip Family to support the Empire as pillars, but he did not know how to make the most of that. Instead, he intentionally tried to pull down those pillars. Now, he is not using the opportunity to strengthen his position. He ignored Prince Barond and was putting all his resources into searching for Miss Jojo. Besides that, there is also Rody! I tried so hard to persuade

him that day, but that fool did not listen! Now the Imperial Capital is in chaos and he disappeared again... Sigh..."

Old Mark suddenly looked at Seth and coldly said, "Don't you think that your words are very strange?"

"Oh?"

Old Mark lightly said, "I don't care if the Emperor is a fool. Whether he wants the throne or that woman has got nothing to do with me. However, that boy Rody... Sigh... You said that you had persuaded him to continue being a Duke. For whose sake did you try and convince him? Isn't it for your own sake? This is because you want to escape your own responsibility!"

Seth laughed. His expression did not change. "Do you think I am too selfish?"

"Yes." Old Mark was still lazing on the chair, but his eyes had turned sharp. "Who is Rody? He is just someone that is unrelated to all these. You intentionally made him the Duke of the Tulip Family for the sake of the Empire and for the sake of the survival of the Tulip Family... He had to fight, he had to kill... For what? Now he is a skilled person that could defeat Reuenthal in the Northwest. He could also use the 'Lightning God's Whip' to get rid of all the rebels at the Westwood province. Do you intend to chain this person up and force him to work himself to the bone for your family for the rest of his life?"

Seth's smile was unchanging as he quietly listened to Old Mark. He then slowly said, "Do you think I have gone too far?"

Seth suddenly sighed and walked to the window. He looked at the sky and murmured, "Am I really too selfish?"

He then gave a strange laugh. "But, why does the Tulip Family forever have to be the one to protect the Empire and the Radiant continent? Why must the Tulip Family bear this heavy burden? Everyone says that the Tulip Family will protect the Radiant

Continent but who will protect the Tulip Family? For centuries, the Tulip Family has been the fence, the castle and the pillars! But... For what? Why does that [stupid thorny flower family](#) always want us to be guards? Abbas XI is obviously a fool! Why do we need to risk our lives for him?"

"Is that why you made Rody do it?" Old Mark laughed coldly.

Seth's expression was calm. "So, what? The Tulip Family's banner has been flying for centuries. It is about time for it to come down and for a new banner to fly instead. What is wrong with that?"

"Don't you think you are contradicting yourself?" Old Mark frowned. "You do not want to risk your life for the Emperor. So why must Rody risk his life instead? I also don't see any new banner. If Rody continues to pose as the Duke, it will still be the Tulip Family's banner that will be flying!"

Seth shook his head and said softly, "You do not understand... You do not understand." He then laughed and said, "Rody is a very suitable person for this. He is brave but soft-hearted. He is determined, but he has his own principles. Such a person is suitable to be the Regiment Commander of the Empire. The Empire also still needs the Tulip Family's banner. After a few years, the Empire would no longer have a need for the Tulip Family. At that time, the Tulip Family can safely disappear."

"A few years? Disappear?" Mark shook his head. "What are your intentions?"

Seth lightly replied, "I will not harm Rody, and I will also not chain him to us. At most... I will temporarily be using him." He then sighed and continued, "Unfortunately, I cannot become like him. I have already said this before. I cannot become like my father. I will never be qualified to become a Regiment Commander. I am someone who hides in the dark. The Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family is someone that stands under the sun and is an

idol admired by many. Unfortunately, I am not that kind of person. The Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family needs to be brave. It is a pity that I am not brave. I do not even want to see blood. Even if you take me to the battlefield, I am afraid of pain. The Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family has to be upright, but I prefer to use irregular methods. For example, right now, if there was an enemy in front of us, my father or Rody would pull out their sword and challenge their opponent. They would use the proper way to defeat their opponent. That is the heroic way. However, I prefer to use different methods."

He turned to look at Old Mark and lightly said, "Some people are born heroes. However, being a hero is tiring. I like wine and pretty women. I like to enjoy myself. I like freedom and plotting. Unfortunately, to be a hero and to be admired by millions of people is out of bound for me."

"Nonsense!" Old Mark snorted in contempt. "Who said heroes cannot like pretty women? Aren't there stories in this world about heroes having affairs with pretty women?"

"That is not affair, my friend." 1 Seth laughed. "That is called love. It is the love between the hero and the beautiful woman. They are all dazzling and bright. However, playboys are different. Heroes should be burly, with a sword in one hand and his beloved in the other. He would then stand at the highest point and look majestically at the millions respecting him. As for me, I would not use a sword even if you gave me one. As for women, the more the better. The faster the women are changed, the better for me."

"Hahaha..." Old Mark burst into laughter. "You are not hero material indeed. You should be..."

Seth also laughed. "I should be a playboy that schemes behind the hero. I should be a person like Dandong."

Old Mark shook his head. "However, I am confused by you. What does this have to do with Rody? You had said earlier that you

would make use of Rody for a another few years. After a few years, the Empire would no longer need him. What do you mean by that?"

Seth looked, at Old Mark and asked back, "What do you think the Empire needs the most right now?"

Old Mark shook his head and replied, "Of course it needs a real Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family. A man that wields a sword to defend the dignity of the Empire and repels possible assailants!"

Seth looked at Old Mark in pity. "Is this the conclusion you obtained after living for over two hundred years? My God, you better don't claim to be Dandong's disciple in the future. He would be so ashamed that he would come back to life."

Ignoring Old Mark's murderous glare, Seth coldly continued, "The Empire needs a real Emperor, a leader! And not an idiot who only knows how to dig his own grave!"

Old Mark laughed. "An Emperor? Are you trying to become an Emperor?"

Seth was shocked and immediately replied, "Of course not! I do not even want to be a Duke! What makes you think I would want to become an Emperor? Do you think it is nice to become an Emperor?" Seth smiled and continued, "Have you seen puppet shows? The one where the puppets are tied on a string and then made to dance."

"Of course."

Seth smiled. "If you could stand behind and control the Emperor. Wouldn't that be more interesting?"

Old Mark sighed again. "Who was the one that said you are a person without ambition? The person who said it is blind."

Seth shrugged his shoulders. "I have never said such things. I only said that I cannot become a hero. I did not say that I cannot

become formidable."

Seth then gave a strange laughter. "I knew two to three years ago that Abbas XI was impotent. He has not been with the Empress in the past two years. This was not something in the open. I would not have known if Jojo had not, inadvertently, told me."

"Hmph, why do you care about these things?"

Seth shook his head. "Of course, if a playboy like me does not care about such things, what else would I care about? Do you think I care about the battle in the Northwest or the holy war with the Roland Continent?" He then sighed and continued, "But, I still know more than others... Her Highness the Empress is not feeling well."

"Hmm?"

Seth smiled. "Our dear Empress seems to be pregnant. However, she has not told the Emperor."

Old Mark stared at Seth with wide eyes.

Seth lightly said, "That is why nobody should bother aiming for the title of Crown Prince. Even if Bayan comes back to life, I also have a way to kill him again! Nobody can fight for the position of Crown Prince anymore. This is because that position has already been given to the child in the Empress' womb."

At that time, anybody would have asked the same question. Old Mark was not an exception and asked, "Who is the father?"

Seth smiled calmly and replied, "I am."

"You... You are truly formidable..." Old Mark was stunned for a long time before he slowly spoke, "You actually..." Old Mark then laughed like a madman. "You actually cuckolded the Emperor!"

Seth gave a strange laughter. "Such a beautiful future... After a few months, the Emperor would be dead. My son would then become the new ruler. Rody will continue to serve as the Duke of

the Tulip Family, and I will be the Dandong of the new generation! I will create a new age in the Empire!"

Old Mark smiled and replied, "I am afraid it won't be so easy. The Emperor will die within a few months? Although that person is annoying, he does not seem to be short-lived. Do you plan to kill him? Don't forget. Right now, he is still an Emperor while you are nobody."

Seth lightly replied, "You don't understand. I have hundreds of ways to end his life. However, I don't think I even need to act." Seth laughed helplessly. "Our Emperor's life would end in about a few months. That is what I saw from his urine and his feces. Don't forget that you are the one who taught me about medicine."

"Stop looking at me." Seth told Old Mark. "Your gaze is making me uncomfortable. Alright. Let me tell you. The one that wants the Emperor to die is Barond. He wants the Emperor to quickly die so that his son can succeed the throne early. Poisoning the Emperor is not too hard to accomplish and can be done by bribing the people in the Imperial Palace. Besides that, the Emperor is a fool. This could not be done so easily during the era of Abbas the Great. There are thousands of Imperial Guards and master warriors. Even the strongest warrior, Master Autumn, is there. So, what? They cannot eat for the Emperor."

Seth then sighed. "It was really a good plan. Administer poison slowly for two years. The poison would slowly accumulate before killing its victim. This would not be discovered so easily."

Old Mark sighed and asked, "How do you know so much?"

Seth smiled faintly. "This is the benefit of being an unnamed playboy. Rody helped me by attracting all the attention, including the vast majority of hostile eyes. As I hide in the dark, I am able to see and hear more things than others."

In case anyone forget, the royal family's emblem is a thorny flower.

Chapter 156: Rody's Smile

Rody was sitting in Master Autumn's courtyard outside the city. He held the leaf that had been sliced into two by Master Autumn, still stunned by the event.

"Thrust at the warmth of spring, the uprightness of summer, the charm of autumn, and the quiet elegance of winter." Rody repeated Master Autumn's words from that day and sighed. "This sounds really complicated."

He picked up the Dragon Fang sword and gently looked at it. He then stood up, shouted lightly and slashed downwards. There was a loud sound, and a small crater appeared on the ground. The nearby tree also shook and its leaves started to fall fluttering down..

"I still can't do it..." Rody shook his head. "Could it be that it is impossible to work with more power?"

He slowly stretched out his hands, caught a leaf with his fingers and tossed it out again. He then slashed at it quickly with the other hand.

The leaf that was cut by the sword filled with fighting energy immediately dispersed and turned into dust.

"It will not work. Your method will not work." Master Autumn suddenly appeared behind Rody and frowned. "You will not become stronger just by being more powerful. The way you used it earlier is no different from how you would use any other weapons."

Master Autumn showed a wry smile when he saw Rody's distressed expression. "It is not easy to breakthrough this bottleneck. You are already very, very powerful. You have already reached the realm of a Sacred Swordsman. However, it is not so easy to practice. Simply using such strength, you would still be like

a defenceless baby in front of people with a strong domain."

"Control!" Master Autumn said softly, "Control is the true essence! Why are the Gods powerful? The reason is because they can control this space. [They can make it snow during the sixth month](#); they can make the thunder roll; they can make time stop and even distort the space in front of us. That is why the Gods are so powerful. They can override everything!"

He paused for a while and then continued, "Those with a strong domain are said to have an existence close to God because they are able to create their own domain within God's world. They are the masters of everything within their own domain."

Master Autumn then patted Rody's shoulder as he looked at the sky and said, "There are rules in this world! Why are there stars in the sky? Why does the sun rise when the moon sets? Why do the four seasons exist? Why are there spring showers and winter snows? As long as you comprehend these rules, you can control everything in your hands!"

Rody seemed enlightened. He looked at his hands, then slowly raised them and murmured, "Comprehend..."

"Yes!" Master Autumn replied. "I cannot teach you how to improve your strength. In fact, you are already very strong. However, you do not know how to control it! You do not know how to make your own rules!"

"First, learn to control your own strength. After that, learn to control the things around you." Master Autumn picked up a withered branch. A brilliant light appeared in his hands. The withered branch suddenly sprouted buds that were green and full of life.

Master Autumn had a glorious expression as he said, "The moon rises after every sunset. Spring arrives after every winter. All of these repeat themselves. The only question is whether we could understand it."

Rody slowly took the branch from Master Autumn's hands. However, the buds on the branch immediately withered in his hands.

"This..." Rody suddenly realized something and looked at Master Autumn. "You have already..."

Master Autumn smiled slightly and nodded his head. He then lightly said, "I can tell you the reason. However, I cannot help you comprehend it. You have already rested here for a few days. I want you to follow me somewhere else today."

"Oh? Where are we going?"

"We are going to the Imperial Palace." Master Autumn's voice sounded strange. "It is time I let you know something... I do not have much time left."

Rody frowned. "Master Autumn, what are you talking about?"

Master Autumn shook his head and whispered, "This is all my fault... The pitiful me of the past did not have enough courage. Later on, that me was still not brave enough! I watched her get hurt by two people... If only I had stopped at that time, she would not have to suffer! Had I done that, I would not need to watch her secretly shed tears every day. She is just a defenceless woman. I will not sit idly by and watch anyone hurt her. Not even that bastard!"

He looked at Rody and said softly. "Today, I have already made a decision. I will take a friend with me and leave here forever. However, before that, I need to see and understand something."

"What is it?"

...

A woman in the Imperial Palace was speaking softly, "I am worried. Why have you not come and visit me in such a long time? There is also Jojo... Where has she disappeared to?"

The woman's voice continued. "His Majesty has been dispatching people to see me, but I hid from them. What are you going to do? Do you really want to see me die?"

A voice sighed and slowly replied. "It is not easy to come in here. Don't worry. That man will die very soon. Our son will become the ruler of this continent. This world would change because of us... It is truly an interesting thing."

The woman turned silent. However, a clear voice suddenly spoke out.

"He is deceiving you."

Momentarily, the door was pushed open and a slender figure walked in.

Seth frowned and whispered, "Master Autumn."

Master Autumn looked at the feeble Empress who was sitting behind Seth. His face had an agitated expression before looking back at Seth. "Have you forgotten my warning years ago?"

His voice turned cold. "I have warned you since the first time you privately met with the Empress. Don't think that I don't dare to kill you just because you are his son."

Seth's expression remained unchanged as he said, "Of course, you do." He then shook his head and continued, "But you will not kill me."

Facing Master Autumn's murderous gaze, Seth slowly stepped forward and said, "I know that when a man loves a woman, he would do anything. You would even dare to kill God's son if he was the offender. However, you would not do it."

Seth looked at Master Autumn mockingly and said, "Master Autumn. I am not as strong as you but I know a lot of things." He then lowered his voice. "You love her, but she loves me. That is why, you will not kill me. Others might, but you would not." After that, Seth smiled. "That is because you are Master Autumn."

Master Autumn was startled, and his gaze turned colder. "You are right. I would not. There were a lot of things that I did not know, but now, I do."

Master Autumn took a deep breath and looked back to the Empress. He softly said, "Do you still not understand? He does not love you. He will not fall in love with any woman. He got close to Jojo just so that he could get close to you. He got close to you just for his own gain! At that time, you begged me to protect you two and to prevent your secret from being revealed to others... Haha..."

Master Autumn laughed sadly. "How many people have I killed for you? I have assassinated so many people who have accidentally learned your secret. However, were you happy?"

Seth shook his head. "Master Autumn. You really surprised me." He laughed and continued. "I had thought you would stay by her side forever as an invisible bodyguard. Can you tell me why you have suddenly become so courageous today?"

Master Autumn shook his head. "I don't care what you want. Your ambition is your business. I won't even bat an eye if you assassinate the Emperor right now." He slowly took in a breath and then continued, "However, you have now treated her as a bargaining chip, a tool for your ambition!"

Seth shook his head. "You are wrong again. This world needs to be changed! The Empire has decayed too much in the past hundred years. I want to change all this!"

Master Autumn gave a wry smile and replied, "Sav these words for Rody. Unfortunately, I am not Rody. He may move according to your wishes, but I will not."

Seth raised his eyebrows and lightly said, "You know about Rody? Ah, what a pity. I secretly hid from you the past few days and did not come to the Imperial Palace. I hoped that you would not discover us. I did not expect you to find out anyway."

He then looked at Master Autumn and loudly asked, "Why am I wrong? For the Empire, I have prepared an invincible Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family. I abandoned my title and hid behind the scenes! I was willing to give up all the glory that belonged to me! For the Empire, I will also remove that stupid Emperor! I will revive this declining Empire! With me around, the Empire will rise again on this continent! Reuenthal from the Northwest and even the Military Minister, Marquis Garoline, are nothing to me! I will revive this Empire! The Empire is like a ship controlled by a stupid helmsman. I will remove that helmsman!"

Master Autumn shook his head and asked, "For what?"

"For what..." Seth gaze became complicated.

"For the Tulip Family!" Seth slowly said. "For centuries, the Tulip Family is known as the guardian and pillars of the Empire! Why must the Tulip Family bear this responsibility? The Thorn Flower Family is the Imperial Family! Why don't they bear this responsibility? For what? Let me tell you! To replace the dying Thorn Flower Family and to make the Tulip Family the real master of this continent!"

Seth's eyes became excited as he continued. "My son will become the Emperor of the continent! The Tulip Family's descendant will become the new master of the continent!"

Master Autumn shook his head again. He looked at the spirited Seth and said, "I have misjudged you! We have all misjudged you!"

Master Autumn gave a wry smile. "Everyone had thought that you feared responsibility and are just a playboy who escapes from his own responsibilities. Hmph. I had never expected you to be working for your own family. However, you were even more conscientious and dedicated compared to Nicole."

Seth slowly said, "When I was young, I read a saying among Dandong's notes. Although most of it was written in a strange language, I have already been reading the ones written in the

Imperial language since young. Do you know what was that saying?"

He calmly spoke, "These words were, 'make concessions to gain advantages'."

"A new era will begin in my hands. The Empire will have an invincible Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family. As for me, I will become a wise person like Dandong! Rody and I will create a brilliant era for the Empire! Master Autumn. Do you still think I am wrong?"

Master Autumn had a complicated expression. "You are very strange. You look very ambitious, but you do not seem interested in the throne. You... Why are you doing this? Why did you do all of this?"

Seth laughed. "There is no reason why." Seth showed an earnest gaze. "This is all for the wonderful scene! I want to see what kind of era I could create! Tell me. Is that all for myself? Am I too selfish?"

Master Autumn nodded and sighed. "I do not know how to describe you - you are despicable, crazy and shameless but still admirable."

Seth bowed gently and elegantly as he said, "Thank you for the compliment." After that, he smiled and asked. "Master Autumn. Do you still think that I am wrong? I need your strength. I need you to help me deal with those people from God's religion. I also need you to help me deal with the people on the Northern Continent. However, I do not believe that they are heathens. To begin with, I do not believe in Gods!"

Master Autumn looked at Seth and lightly said, "I will not."

"What?" Seth frowned slightly. He then sighed with regret. "Truly a pity... Fine..." He then lightly said, "In that case, Master Autumn. Tell me. Why did you look for me today? Are you going to

kill me now?"

The Empress was trembling and crying behind Seth. Master Autumn felt his heart ache and whispered, "I was wrong about you. I had thought that you were a person without ambition. I had thought that you would stay outside of this dispute and blessed the two of you. Now, it is time to make up for my mistakes."

Seth's expression did not change. He lightly said, "Oh? You have made up your mind? Then come and kill me. I will watch you do it!"

Master Autumn slowly walked forward and said softly, "I will not kill you. However, I will not let you continue to use her as a tool. I will take her away!"

These words made Seth freeze for a moment before he turned his head upwards and laughed. He laughed wildly as if he had just heard a ridiculous joke.

Master Autumn frowned. "Why are you laughing?"

Seth held back his laughter and looked back coldly. He then softly said, "You have finally summoned your courage? However, it is unfortunate..." He then showed a mocking expression and continued, "You are too late. If only you had this courage before she entered the palace, or before I met her... Your courage came too late!"

Seth turned and looked at the thin and pallid face of the Empress. He then said softly, "Tell me. Tell him too. Are you willing to leave me to follow him?"

The Empress' dull eyes looked at Master Autumn and then back at Seth. She showed a profound expression and then answered,

"No!"

Seth sighed. He did not show a proud expression but instead had eyes filled with regret and compassion. He reached out to the Empress' hair and softly told her, "Lovestruck woman. He is right.

I am a terrible person. To me, you are just a tool. In this world, there are many that would lie to you. However, Master Autumn would definitely not lie to you."

The Empress shook her head. Her eyes pleaded as she gritted her teeth. "No! I will not leave you!"

Seth laughed lightly and then he looked back to Master Autumn. He coldly said, "Do you have anything else to say?"

Master Autumn's calm face turned into one of grief. Even when he faced a vampire with a legendary artifact, he had never wavered. However, his expression has now collapsed.

Seth shook his head and sighed, "Don't you understand? A woman does not see anything else the moment she is blinded by love."

Master Autumn gritted his teeth. "Are you really someone from the Tulip Family? Why do you have such an evil heart?"

Seth laughed. He could still laugh calmly. "I am the son of the Tulip Family. The blood that flows in my veins is definitely that of the Tulip Family! However, I am the Tulip Family's most outstanding offspring!" After that, he coldly said, "Is Rody out there? Why don't you let him come in?"

The moment these words came out, Rody walked in and angrily stared at Seth.

Seth looked at Rody's angry appearance and shook his head. "What a pity. Although you are outstanding and have great potential, you are not a schemer. I have always thought that the mind was mightier than violence. That is why when I was young, I have considered being a wise person like Dandong instead of the invincible Regiment Commander of the Tulip Family."

Master Autumn gave a wry smile. "The answer is obvious."

Seth nodded his head and replied, "Yes. The answer is obvious. It is also more interesting to be a schemer than a hero. This is my

choice." He then looked at Rody while ignoring his hostile gaze and lightly asked. "What is your choice, Duke? My sister's beloved. Don't look at me like that. You love my sister. That is why no matter how much you hate me, you cannot kill me. So, what is your choice? Are you willing to cooperate with me to create a great era and leave our names behind in history?"

Rody did not answer. All sorts of emotions tore at his heart. One moment, he felt at a loss. The next moment, he felt angry.

Seth coldly looked at him and lightly said, "You are Rody. One year ago, you were just a civilian struggling in poverty. You constantly worried about the living expenses for the following month and whether you would have enough money to eat. If it was not because of me, you would not be here today. You would not become a hero that earned the admiration of millions! There would not be anyone cheering for you, fighting for you or dying for you! You would not gain my sister's love, and you would not gain the admiration of the people on the continent! But look at yourself right now! You have taken down your mask! You have revealed your own identity! Do you think this is good?"

Seth smiled gloomily, and then he suddenly pointed at Master Autumn and coldly said, "This person is a good example! Even if you eventually become an invincible warrior like him, what can you do? Even if you stand at very the top among the warriors, it means nothing! Look at him! He is helpless against the person he loves! What is power? It is not domain force, god or demon strength but control!" Seth stretched out a hand and clenched it tightly as he loudly said, "What is so great about personal strength? With my intelligence, I would have been an invincible master if I wanted to! However, it is pointless! Being the strongest on the continent is still insignificant! Even if you have Master Autumn's strength, it is also useless! Can you understand the joy of creating a new era? Can you appreciate the feeling of seeing everything thriving in your hands?"

Seth suddenly laughed. "You know what, Rody? I have always thought highly of you!"

He laughed proudly. "There are thousands of people in the Imperial Capital. Yet, I picked you at a glance! Do you remember how you came to the Tulip Family's mansion and met my sister?"

"Could it be you? Are you the one that... arranged everything?" Rody frowned.

"Yes!" Seth answered calmly. "The man that hired you to go out of the city was me. All of you thought that you attacked the wrong person. In fact, it was not wrong. Did you know? I have observed you for a long time. You have always been first in your swordsmanship. You have great potential and qualifications. You have a strong character and your figure is similar to mine. You are also very pure and have no particular bad habits. You are also just a civilian. There are many other things. I have observed you for an entire year. Did you know? I believe that you are someone that can be molded into a hero! It was perfect... except for your face at that point in time! Fortunately, I knew that my sister had a magic mask. I also happened to know my sister's character. That was why, I tried it out. I did not expect it to be successful!"

"In order to hook you in, I first asked your friend and found out that you were short on money. I then spent some money to hire your friend for the first job so that he made some money. . After that, I knew that he would invite you for the next job. The result was a success! What you thought was the wrong target was actually not a mistake but a 'coincidence' that I arranged! I also had Old Mark to help me. Besides that, did you think I would leave so many books and notes for a civilian boy to just read? I left it there for you to read! I could not be by your side, but I wanted to teach you how to be rebellious, strong and how to be a qualified Regiment Commander! I wanted to teach you the qualities of a real hero! This is to slowly shape the new hero of the Empire!"

"These are all..." Rody began to tremble.

"Yes. It is all me!" Seth coldly said, "I am the one that did everything!"

Seth was unafraid as he looked at the two extremely strong warriors. In his eyes, it was as if he was set high above the masses. "Now choose!"

There was a moment of silence.

Rody's eyes were lifeless and he could only hear the beating of his own heart. He felt a sense of agony and humiliation. He then trembled as though a different emotion had taken over.

He was torn with various emotions. His face was filled with anger, then distress, then disappointment. Finally, he gave a cold laugh.

Master Autumn raised his eyebrows and was about to speak when Rody suddenly laughed.

Rody stood up, ramrod straight. His vacant look disappeared. He laughed happily, without a care in the world. The anger and fury he previously felt was gone, leaving behind only a smile.

Rody looked at Seth and gently said a few words.

Unlike Seth's, his words were not so agitated, not so ambitious, not so persuasive.

However, his tone was serious as if he was talking about common sense.

Rody had smiled and simply said, "Seth. I think you are a very pitiful person."

This story came from China, located at the Northern Hemisphere. Winter (and thus, snow) starts sometime around December. That is why snowing during June is not right. I left the translation as the literal 'sixth month' because the characters don't live on Earth. For all I know, they have thirteen months.

Chapter 157: Magnificent Reply

"You are a madman." Rody calmly and slowly said, "No. This way of saying it is not accurate and would be unfair to you. However, you are still a madman. You are a madman whose heart is as hard as steel and is calm and cold like ice! Your insanity is not from your crazy plans. On the contrary, you are the most far-sighted person I have ever met. Your insanity is also not from your arrogance. You are not arrogant at all. You weave your traps extremely calmly, like a spider, to carry out your plan. You are one of the calmest people I have ever met."

Rody then gave a strange laugh and continued. "However, I still have to say that you are a madman. A pitiful madman!"

Seth sighed and shook his head. He softly said, "Are you trying to annoy me? It is not going to work. I will not get angry from that."

"Really?" Rody smiled even more calmly. "That means you are even more pitiful than I had thought."

Rody glanced at Master Autumn and slowly continued, "In fact, if you had used Nicole in the past, I would have fully committed myself to your cause. Unfortunately, you cannot do that anymore." Rody then looked back at Seth coldly and slowly said, "But I still want to say it. You are a madman. On top of that, you are very pitiful."

"Keep talking."

Rody sighed. "I do not know anything about schemes. If it goes according to your expectations and I start listening to you, the chances of success would be great. You will be able to control the most influential family in the Empire. You will obtain the support of the army. You have the Empress in your hand and also a son. All you need now is for the Emperor to die. Although I do not know what it is, I am sure that you have your ways to let your son inherit the throne. However, everything you have spoken of relies on a

single foundation." At this point, Rody pointed to himself. "That is only if I obey you."

Seth frowned. "Does that mean you are unwilling? Are you dissatisfied? You are just a person struggling at the bottom of the Empire. I gave you a glorious position and even the opportunity to be admired by many."

"Feelings!" Rody had suddenly interrupted him and coldly replied, "Feelings! Seth. You misjudged human feelings! Your mistake is that you did not take feelings into account! In other words, you do not have feelings!"

Rody stepped forward and continued, "Just now, you said that you would not get angry. However, it is not only anger. Your other human emotions are also missing. You do not know love, mercy, sadness and even hatred. You only have your schemes in your head. That is why it may not be your fault. However, it became your biggest failure! As you do not have human emotions, your plan does not account for the feelings of others, especially mine!"

Rody spoke calmly, "You were not wrong. I am just a humble person. In my opinion, my life's first priority was my survival. I do not have any requirements or expectations besides that."

"After that, the situation of my life suddenly changed. Following your scheming, I ended up in a different world. I was admired by countless people, but it also gave me a lot of pressure! Life in the army was very difficult. Not just hardship in life. I saw a lot of things that I had never imagined."

"Yes. I became the Duke of the Tulip Family. I became a great Regiment Commander in the eyes of many! I took my sword and ignorantly entered the battlefield! At that time, I had learned that life is extremely fragile. The tender branches and flowering buds you see today may break or wither away tomorrow. I do not know how I survived those days. I have seen bright lives destroyed. The strong and upright bend and fall to dust. Some of these are due

other's scheming, some are of their own doing. The loss of lives happens incessantly every day."

"I have also killed people. I have soaked in blood, but now, my heart no longer races from killing. I now feel that killing people is not scary."

"During those days, I do not know why I wanted to survive. I survive merely to stay alive. I survive to kill others who wanted to survive. Are these meaningful? Is it meaningful to stay alive? I was very confused. However, I finally understood it in the end."

"You are right. If I accept your instructions and cooperate with you, I will gain a lot of things that I would not have gotten as a civilian, such as glory, wealth and attention! But, I would then become your puppet and just dance according to your instructions, reflecting on useless matters."

"Of course. You think that you are very smart! Thinking by itself may be normal for a smart person like you. As for me, I would not need to think. That is your thing. I would just need to become a tool that obey orders..."

Rody then had an expression filled with magnanimous radiance and slowly said, "To some extent, I would like to thank you. Thank you, Seth. You have sent me to the battlefield, to hell and also to paradise! I have seen blood and death! I have seen people bleed and turn into cold corpses! Therefore, I have changed! Even though it sounds ridiculous, I now understand things that you cannot understand. I now understand a lot of things that you should have been able to comprehend."

The color of Seth's face finally started to change. He frowned and asked, "Understand what?"

Rody took a deep breath and replied, "The meaning of the Tulip Family!"

"I understand the reason I fight. It is not so that I could survive. I

kill others not for survival but for honor! The greatest thing in the world that must not be tarnished! The greatness of the Tulip Family lies in its honor! The reason the Tulip Family is admired is because of honor! It is not..." Rody's expression gradually sank, "... these despicable and shameful schemes!"

Before Seth could reply, Rody shook his head and laughed bitterly. "Is it strange? I am just an outsider. You are the real heir of the Tulip Family! However, here I am, telling you the true meaning of the Tulip Family. I can even tell you that you are wrong and I am right!"

"Like the others, I have also misjudged you. I thought that you were someone who did not care about your family. But now, I found out that you are a madman trying to revive your family in your own way. However, your method is crazy. It is so crazy that you are now destroying your own family!"

"The Tulip Family's banner is admired by others precisely because it is willing to become the pillar that supports the Empire for hundreds of years! It is like a strong city wall, a resonant horn, and the sword in the hands of the soldiers! It can be anything, but it cannot become king and ambition!"

"The greatness of the Tulip Family was forged from iron and blood under the sun. It is not from political schemes!"

Rody smiled happily and calmly. His eyes were clear, with not a hint of doubt. "After understanding these, do you think I would still do your bidding?" He lightly continued, "The Tulip Family's banner can only fly above our troops, fluttering in the hands of our warriors, above the fortress of our formidable enemies - definitely not in the palace! The Tulips are fearless warriors, not kings!"

After that, Rody looked at Seth and lightly said, "This is something that a person who only hides in the dark will never understand!" He then showed a look of contempt and coldly continued, "Those who stand in the shadows will never understand

the meaning of the sun!"

Seth's expression finally changed. He looked at Rody in disbelief. It was as if he could no longer recognize the person in front of him.

Is this person that silly boy? Is he the same person that is usually manipulated by others? Is he the same person that usually did not have his own opinion?

"Are you surprised?" Rody asked lightly. "I am sure that I am not as smart as you. I will never be able to hatch such a big scheme in my life. I will also never be able to figure out a lot of complicated stuff. However, I know that you are now trampling on us! I do not know if the scene you describe is good or bad. I also do not know whether it is right to refuse to cooperate with you. However, I know that you are now trampling on others. You are trampling on me and also human feelings!"

Rody gradually clenched his fist and started to look murderous. "I am not like you. It seems you do not have any human feelings. You would not become angry. But I do. After being fooled by you for such a long time, I now feel extremely angry! Do you know what I wish to do the most right now?"

Rody then gritted his teeth and continued, "The thing I want to do the most right now is to punch you in the nose. I want to see if you can still maintain that heartless smile."

Seth sighed and shook his head. He then laughed lightly and elegantly. "If it is just like what you said, do you think I should admit defeat? Do you think I should admit defeat since you refuse to cooperate with me?"

He looked at murderous Rody and smiled. "I really misjudged you. Are you really that Rody? Why did you suddenly become so assertive? How did such a simple-minded person suddenly come up with such a magnificent argument?" He then said softly, "What did you say earlier? The branches and flowers you see today may break or wither away the next..."

Seth then frowned and look at Rody. "Why would you not listen to me? Why do you not want to cooperate with me to create that wonderful scene? Sigh... It is such an interesting thing... As long as you nod your head, we can recreate a great era like that of the late Duke of the Tulip Family and the Sage Dandong. Isn't it tempting at all?"

"Yes!" Rody admitted. "It is tempting! I admit that I was tempted by you, but now I understand that it is just a falsehood."

"Falsehood?"

Rody nodded. "Falsehood! The truth is that there is a poor woman crying in misery in front of me. The truth is that I thought I was doing something very serious, respectful and great. However, I found out I was just manipulated by you, and everything is a joke! The truth is that a madman is daydreaming!"

"Alright." Seth nodded listlessly. "Since you refuse to cooperate with me, I have to give up."

He showed a strange gaze and then he slowly said something that made Rody and Master Autumn surprised.

The schemer had said, "I admit defeat."

"What?" Rody was stunned.

Seth smiled and repeated. "I said I admit defeat. You all don't believe me?" He then laughed at himself. "What do you think I should do now? If you all turn hostile, I would not be able to defeat you. Run away and start scheming in the dark to compete with you? That is not my style... Perhaps my biggest mistake is you, Rody. I am really shocked. Did I pick the wrong person?"

He shook his head. "However, I always think that I did not pick the wrong person... Why? You have obviously ruined my plans but why do I still feel like I did not pick the wrong person?"

He suddenly patted his clothes and stretched his waist. He then lightly said, "Master Autumn. Let me warn you. The Pope has

already learned of your secret. This is something you have to deal with on your own. Also, Rody, you are the most interesting person I have ever met. Could it be that only a simple-minded person would understand those things?"

He then looked at the Empress behind him and walked over. He gently kissed her hair and lightly said, "I have no regrets in my heart. That is because it is just like what that boy had said. I am a person without feelings. But I still want to say that I am sorry. My dear, it was wonderful to be with you."

After that, the elegant playboy stood in front of the three of them and spoke strangely. "Everyone, the plot has been exposed, and the show has ended. It is now time to close the curtains."

He slowly walked to the entrance and looked back at the three. He then bowed elegantly, smiled and burst into flames.

Before anyone could react, his body was completely engulfed in the flames. The Empress jumped up but she was restrained by Master Autumn. The Empress then cried out. Seth's body continued to burn and ashes started flying everywhere along with the smoke.

...

"Seth. Did you really just give up like this?"

"Yes, my dear Old Mark. Why not? It is not elegant to continue with this."

"..."

"My dear Old Mark. Don't you think that this is already very interesting?"

"..."

"I am talking about Rody. That guy made me very surprised. He is like a growing wild animal. I even believe that I am already partially successful... Think about it. We have created such an

interesting person. Perhaps we have already created history."

"Sigh... So, what do you want to do now?"

"Hahaha..." Seth laughed. "That boy said that I do not have feelings. I felt really helpless when he said that. However, I could not even find the words to refute him... So... I want to find my feelings."

"Human feelings?"

"Yes. Love, hate, anger, sorrow... I want to find these feelings.... Think about it. The words he said sounded interesting. I want to experience it for myself."

Chapter 158: Great Wind Rises

As a carriage left the northern gate of the Imperial Capital, Master Autumn was watching the sleeping Empress.

Seth had suddenly disappeared.

Rody thought bitterly to himself. Seth is still alive. He had expected this outcome. He used a flashy way to leave but left behind a big mess!

Rody suddenly realized something ridiculous. Seth had already left, but it seemed like he still won.

Seth had left, but he left behind the Empress and the child in the her womb.

How could that problem be solved? The Empress was absolutely not willing to leave with Master Autumn. She would refuse even if she had to die.

A woman deeply in love would lose all sense of logic. Rody was sure that the Empress would not leave even if she has to die. Now, she must still be thinking of the playboy, that he would one day return.

Master Autumn would also not force her to leave. If he wanted to do that, he would have done so many years ago.

As a result, the situation became complicated.

Although Seth had left, the situation still developed according to his plans.

What is going to happen to the Empress? What is going to happen to her unborn child?

Rody could already see how things would develop in the future. He had no choice but to take over and solve this mess. It also seemed that the only way to settle this problem was to go according to Seth's plan.

It was a big joke. It was as if he had just swung his hand in a full circle to slap himself in the face. Rody felt depressed when he remembered Seth's mocking smile before he disappeared.

When the Empress woke up, she coldly looked at Master Autumn. Her eyes undoubtedly showed deep hatred and seemed to say 'You forced him to leave!'.

Master Autumn was very powerful, but at the same time, he was very weak.

Finally, the Empress called Rody to her side and whispered something. Her words made Rody smile wryly.

The Empress said, "Seth told me that the Emperor is dying."

After leaving the Imperial Palace, Rody suddenly remembered someone. This person might be able to help him solve all these problems.

Some of the things that Seth said was right. Rody was not good at all those crafty plots. His mind just did not work that way.

As a result, Rody explained a little to Master Autumn. He then quietly left the Imperial Palace and went towards the Tulip Family's mansion.

There were many people outside the Duke's mansion as compared to the past. Since the Prince's mansion was attacked, all the other noble families had stepped up the defenses. Security soldiers patrol all over the place and even some streets were blocked from being used by the public.

However, at that moment, Rody's strength was different. Even though there were many guards on patrol, he was still able to easily sneak into the mansion.

He did not go and find Nicole. He was anxious. He directly went into the small and quiet courtyard in the mansion.

He avoided the guards inside the mansion and went to the small

courtyard, which was usually quiet. After that, he opened the door to the laboratory and impatiently whispered, "Andy! Come out!"

He took one glance at the corner where the skeleton used to be and found that the place was empty.

Andy was gone, and even the skeleton was gone.

Rody was extremely alarmed. All this time, he had relied on Andy's advice whenever he could not solve a problem. In a sense, Andy could be considered his teacher. Unfortunately, he could not contact Andy after converting the dragon. At the moment, he had come back in high hopes only to find that Andy had gone missing.

Nicole was feeling uneasy the past few days. There were a lot of things happening in the Imperial Capital. There was an uproar in the Imperial Capital. News had continued to come in. The Prince's mansion had been destroyed and a vampire had appeared in the Imperial Capital. The guards at home had stepped up the defenses, but Nicole continued to stay in her room.

When the news of the Emperor proposing to her first arrived, many people visited the mansion to congratulate her. However, soon none of them dared to say the word 'congratulations' to her. They all knew that Miss Nicole disliked the proposal. In fact, she was absolutely disgusted.

"Sigh..." Nicole looked at her slightly haggard face in the mirror and shook her head. "Nicole, aren't you trying to revive the family? Why did you refuse the Emperor's proposal? Are you a smart person or a fool?"

Just as soon as she said that, she heard a voice reply, "You are a fool. However, you are the most beautiful fool in the world."

Nicole jumped when she heard the familiar voice. She then turned around to see the figure with the familiar voice standing at the window. The window that was originally closed was now half open. That person was standing next to a curtain and showed a

wry smile. He looked at her with tender eyes.

Nicole took a deep breath and was panic stricken. She looked again at the familiar face for a while before she exclaimed, "You are Rody!"

Rody smiled and replied, "It is me. I am back."

Nicole dropped the comb in her hand and stood up. She was stunned as she looked at Rody and murmured, "Your face... You took off the mask! How did you take off the mask? Also... how did you come back? You..."

Before she could finish, Rody had already taken a large step forward and clung to Nicole. He hugged her tightly in his arms and whispered, "Whatever the case, I have returned. Nobody else would be allowed to take you away."

Nicole looked like she had no energy to resist. She tightly clung on to Rody.

As they tightly embraced each other, Rody felt excited. He lowered his head and tried to kiss Nicole. However, Nicole suddenly pushed him away. Nicole had finally reacted as she looked at Rody and asked, "Are you crazy? How can you remove the mask? How did you manage to remove the mask? And... You... How did you suddenly come back? Do you know the consequences of doing so?"

Rody wanted to reply, but Nicole did not give him the chance to speak. "I know you are worried about me. However, I have already rejected the Emperor's proposal! I will be fine! The Emperor cannot force me to enter the Imperial Palace! However, do you know how much trouble there would be because you desperately returned like this?"

Rody's eyes looked helpless. He gently sighed and whispered, "Trouble? Nicole... I am afraid there is a really big trouble! I... I met Seth..."

After about two hours, all the patrolling guards suddenly heard Miss Nicole shouted loudly from upstairs.

"What!"

Nicole stared at Rody with wide eyes. Fortunately, she instinctively covered her mouth the moment she shouted. Her expression then turned gloomy and angry. She trembled as she said, "That bastard! Is he... Is he crazy?"

There was a knock on the door from outside, and a guard loudly asked, "Miss, are you alright?"

Nicole was still angry and immediately shouted, "Why are you shouting? All of you go back down! I am alright. Without my permission, no one is to come up here!"

After the guards outside the room left, Nicole could not help but walk back and forth twice in the room. She frowned and suddenly became angry and sad. Finally, she sighed and whispered, "Rody, this is really going to be trouble."

"I know."

Nicole thought for a moment before she sighed. "But it looks like the only way is to go according to Seth's plans. He also said the Emperor would die! What does he mean?"

Rody shook his head. "I don't know."

"You do not know what he meant?"

Nicole frowned. However, the moment she finished speaking, a guard called from outside. "Miss Nicole, the Commander of the Imperial Guards, Gordon has arrived. He requested to see you immediately!"

Nicole looked at Rody and thought for a moment. She then replied, "Alright, tell Commander Gordon to wait for me in the hall..."

Before she could finish, Gordon's anxious voice was heard, "Miss

Nicole, I am already here. May I enter? This is urgent!"

Nicole froze for a moment and then gave Rody a meaningful glance. Rody immediately went behind the screen used for changing clothes.

Nicole then took a deep breath and said, "Commander Gordon, please come in!"

The door opened, and the heavily armed Gordon walked in. First, he turned around to close the door. He then knelt on one knee. He looked serious and whispered anxiously, "Miss Nicole, sorry for barging into your room. However, the situation is urgent. I also came here secretly... That is why, I cannot..."

"Please speak, Commander Gordon." Nicole replied calmly.

Gordon's voice was not loud but it was very clear.

"Just about two hours ago, His Majesty the Emperor had suddenly fainted... The chief magician and the medical officer, after checking, said..."

"What did they say?"

"They said that His Majesty only has a few days left to live!"

"What!" Nicole jumped as she looked at Gordon.

Gordon whispered, "I had only just learned of this and immediately came here to tell you! Miss..." Gordon hesitated for a moment and then said, "His Majesty is in such a state... but he did not leave behind a Crown Prince! Now, the Imperial Capital is in a complicated situation... The Tulip Family should start making some preparations! Every time the one holding the Imperial Power is replaced, the situation becomes like crossing a ravine on a thin wire! At this moment, the Duke of the Tulip Family is not in the Imperial Capital, so I can only report this to you!"

Nicole's eyes flashed as she thought to herself for a moment. She then whispered, "Thank you, Commander Gordon..." She then

loudly said, "Come, prepare the carriage! I am going to the Imperial Palace!"

Gordon was surprised and loudly asked, "Miss, you are going to the palace right now? Now..."

Nicole shook her head. Her eyes looked strange as she lightly said, "I want to meet Her Highness the Empress!" She paused for a moment and then suddenly said, "Commander Gordon, please go out, first... I wish to change my clothes!"

In an Imperial manor on the outskirts of the city, Prince Barond was gloomily cleaning a dagger. His face was reflected on the cold blade of the dagger.

A trace of grief could be seen in the eyes of the serious looking middle-aged man. Suddenly, a flutter could be heard from the windows, and a pigeon flew in from outside. Prince Barond caught the pigeon and then untied the thread tying a slip of paper to the pigeon's legs. After that, he took a look at the message.

His expression changed and his eyes turned complicated. After that, his eyes turned bright, and he sneered.

"He is going to die... He is actually going to die now..." Prince Barond smiled bitterly. "He is actually going to die now!"

He suddenly threw the paper in his hand, onto the ground and hatefully shouted, "Why? Why did my entire plan go smoothly but my son is dead?"

After taking in a few breaths, he gradually calmed down. He picked up the paper from the ground and read it again. He then laughed madly. "Hahaha... He is dying soon... Then I will become Emperor! I am the Emperor!"

He laughed so hard that tears started to flow out.

After he calmed down, he took a deep breath and shouted. "Come!"

Prince Barond looked at his subordinates that came in and said, "Dispatch people to the Central Cavalry! Summon Regiment Commander Barry to come and see me!"

Prince Barond sneered, and his eyes were fierce. His subordinates could not help but feel surprised when they look at him.

Prince Barond's expression sank and was about to say something when another pigeon flew in through the window. Prince Barond quickly walked to the pigeon and took the paper containing the message from the pigeon's leg. He frowned and said, "What other news could there be..."

The moment he glanced at the paper, his eyes turned wide and he suddenly shouted, "What happened? How could this be? She... She is actually pregnant!"

Inside the mansion of the Military Minister, Marquis Garoline of the Lionheart Family.

The old Marquis stood in front of the door. He had just learned of the news that His Majesty was dying and was currently unconscious. When he learned of this, his eyes trembled slightly, and he immediately gave an order to his trusted subordinate.

"Go to the Northern Legion immediately and tell Milo this news! Tell him to organize the soldiers and then wait for my message! Tell him to be prepared... but he must wait for my message. He is not allowed to act rashly without any instruction from me! Now that His Majesty the Emperor is about to die, the person to inherit throne would be Prince Barond... We were on bad terms as I was His Majesty's trusted confidante. When he succeeds the throne, that is going to be very bad for me! Tell Milo to be prepared for any unexpected circumstances!"

After giving the order, the old Marquis sighed and murmured. "It is time for the person with the Imperial Power to change again... This really makes people become jumpy... If that Barond wants to make a move against the Lionheart Family... Hmph, he better not

forget that we still have control of the Northern Legion of the Empire!"

Marquis Garoline was then escorted by the guards out of the mansion and was about to get on the carriage. Suddenly, a horse rushed through the streets and stopped in front of the Marquis' mansion. The attendant wearing the uniform of the Imperial Palace then immediately jumped off the horse.

Marquis Garoline realized that something was strange and told the guards not to stop the man. He whispered, "Why did you come here personally? I have already received your message."

The man quickly walked to Marquis Garoline's side and whispered something into his ear.

The sly, old fox had managed to keep calm when he had heard the news that the Emperor was dying. However, the moment he heard those words, his facial muscles trembled before he shouted, "We are not going to the Imperial Palace anymore!"

Marquis Garoline looked at the guard's stunned expression. He gloomily and faintly said, "We are leaving the city! We are going to Prince Barond's mansion!"

After Garoline said that, he boarded the carriage and gloomily sat in there. He thought of those words spoken by the planted agent from the Imperial Palace.

"Her Highness the Empress is pregnant! The chief medical officer confirmed it! Now, Miss Nicole of the Tulip Family is together with Her Highness the Empress. In view of the current situation, Her Highness the Empress had given the order in the name of His Majesty the Emperor to recall the Duke of the Tulip Family! This order had been approved by His Majesty's two uncles!"

The old Marquis gloomily gritted his teeth. "Tulip Family..."

A horse quickly rushed in through the East gate of the Imperial Capital. However, it was not stopped by the defenders of the city as

the person on the horse held the command token of the Imperial Family. The horse rode quickly towards where the Central Cavalry was stationed.

A horse also left the Imperial Capital using the North gate. He headed North using the main road. The knight riding the horse looked serious, because he was acting on an order from Marquis Garoline.

In the South, about ten miles away from the Imperial Capital, a dark horse was also riding quickly.

If Sieg or Gordon had seen that horse, they would be very surprised. That was because that was the black horse, 'Garrus', which the late Duke of the Tulip Family had ridden for many years.

The horse was taller and more majestic compared to ordinary horses. Its limbs were strong and its muscles powerful. The blue hair of the cavalryman fluttered in the wind and he had a resolute expression. He assumed the standard posture for a cavalry charge to reduce the consumption of physical strength as much as possible.

That was because he knew that the journey would be very long.

Rody was heading South. His destination was the Purple Leaf City. He could clearly remember Nicole's words.

"Rody, the situation now is really dangerous. You have to return to the South immediately and recall the Wolf Fang as quickly as possible! At the same time, please get Regiment Commander Camus to gather his Southern Army Corps and return to the Imperial Capital! I have the written order here signed personally by Her Highness the Empress! Although Her Highness does not actually have the authority to do this, the situation now is urgent. If you tell Commander Camus the situation in the Imperial Capital, he should understand! If he does not understand, you must persuade him! Master Autumn is here in the Imperial Capital. You

do not have to worry about our safety!"

Rody, originally, did not want to leave the Imperial Capital, but Nicole's words helped him come to a decision.

Nicole said, "Rody... Seth can be considered to have betrayed the Empire and the Tulip Family... I... You are the only one left that I can depend on! If the Emperor dies and Prince Barond learns that the Empress is pregnant, he would start a coup! During a coup, military power is needed! The Tulip Family has deep connection with the military. When the Emperor is dead, who do you think the army would follow? They would know the moment they see the banners!"

Is it a coup? Rody sneered. I am not good at crafty plots. However, if you were to ask me to take the Wolf Fang Army to kill, then this is simple!

...

As the major powers started to move inside the Imperial Capital, something else happened on a remote and desolate hill far away from the outskirts of the Imperial Capital.

It was a cemetery located outside of the city. There were large and small tombs erected there. It could easily be seen that it was a cemetery for civilians. Gloomy clouds covered the cemetery, causing it to be shrouded in fog. It was quiet except for two crows occasional crowing on the branches.

A strange silhouette was creeping around inside the cemetery.

The silhouette was piecing something together on the ground. After that, a light surrounded his body.

After piecing the 'last piece' together, the figure stretched his lazy waist. His wood-like face showed a relaxed smile and he lightly said, "I am finally done... I thought it was something simple, but it was actually quite complicated."

He looked down at his body carefully, then his eyes showed a hint

of satisfaction. "Good, good. It finally has a more human-like appearance. However, I do not know how much spiritual power is consumed and how long it can be supported... It would be better if there were a fresh corpse."

After that, he sighed. "Let's use this first..." He walked two steps awkwardly, and then he laughed bitterly. "What the hell! I am really not used to how a person walks."

He then continued to walk strangely out of the cemetery and finally smiled proudly.

"Rody, boy, I am sure you will be surprised when you see me! Haha haha ... This old me is really a genius!"

Chapter 159: Assemble in the Imperial Capital

A uproar had arisen within the Imperial Capital. Even the ordinary civilians could feel that something was wrong in the Imperial Capital.

Large groups of soldiers from the Central Cavalry had lined up on the streets and replaced the public security soldiers. They were fully armed as they patrolled the streets.

The Imperial Guards in the Imperial Palace also looked like they were about to face a formidable enemy. Almost all of the fifty thousand Imperial Guards had been mobilized. They walk up and down on the palace city walls and the guards at the entrance of the Imperial Palace were stricter than usual.

The guards of the city gates of the Imperial Capital too became even more strict. Both the commoners and the nobles were subjected to strict checks. This action cemented the fact that something was wrong in the Imperial Capital.

The higher ranked nobles of the Empire had learned that the Emperor was dying. The palace also officially announced that the Empress was pregnant. The smarter ones immediately realized that a fight for the throne was about to begin.

Even some of the duller nobles knew. When Prince Barond suddenly returned to the city after hearing that the Emperor was dying, they realised that he had come back to fight for the throne.

Nicole now lived in the Imperial Palace and stayed by the Empress' side every day. She did not like this at all. It was not a happy thing to face a woman who could not control her own emotions. However, Nicole could understand the Empress' feelings. The Empress was alarmed, dejected and frightened.

The only people the Empress could rely on right now were the

people of the Tulip Family. As a result, Nicole was now so worried that she lost her appetite everyday.

Gordon constantly provided Nicole with information.

Prince Barond has returned to the city!

Regiment Commander Barry of the Central Cavalry has come into contact with Prince Barond!

There is an unusual activity in the Central Cavalry. They have assembled the army!

Marquis Garoline has contacted Prince Barond!

The Northern Legion has started to act strangely!

Every time Nicole heard a piece of information, she felt that her worries had increased. According to common knowledge, the Marquis and the Lionheart Family were the trusted subordinates of the Emperor and the Empress. He also never got along with Prince Barond. In this situation, the ally that could be most easily won over would be the Marquis.

However, there were two reasons why this would not work.

It was also common knowledge that the Lionheart Family and the Tulip Family were at odds. Now that the Empress had relied on the Tulip Family, she would not be able to win the support of the Lionheart Family. These two families would never stand on the same side.

Naturally, there were no such things as an eternal enemy in politics. Nicole clearly understood this. Garoline knew that, right now, Prince Barond and the Empress' child were going to fight for the throne. The winner would become the new Emperor. Now, Garoline needed to decide who to support. If he successfully helped the new Emperor, then the Lionheart Family would become the greatest contributor that helped the new Emperor secure the throne.

For the Marquis, this was the best opportunity for the Lionheart Family to trump the Tulip Family as the first family in the Empire. Besides that, the odds for the current situation laid with Prince Barond, not with the unborn child.

Although the Marquis had always been loyal to the Abbas XI, he was not blindly loyal.

The other reason for his decision was because the child in the Empress's belly was not the child of His Majesty the Emperor.

Nicole's only peace of mind was that the Central Command of the Imperial Guards had maintained their loyalty to the Imperial family, especially Commander Gordon who, without hesitation, had declared his allegiance to her.

The Imperial Guards Central Command had rejected contacts with Prince Barond. The other old generals had also announced their neutral stances. They wanted to discuss such things only after the Emperor's condition has improved. Only God knew whether he would wake up.

Nicole believed that once things turned violent, besides the other Tulip Family supporters, the Central Command would not hesitate to fight on her side.

However, there was another ridiculous question.

How much power did the Imperial Guards Central Command still have?

In order to reduce the influence of the Tulip Family, the Emperor had weakened the strength of the Imperial Guards Central Command. On the other hand, power in one of the Empire's four largest armies, the Northern Legion, was given to Marquis Garoline's Lionheart Family. The Central Cavalry's power was also given to the one of the Imperial Family's nobles, Regiment Commander Barry. Originally, the Northern Legion was loyal to Abbas XI or at least, that was what Abbas XI had thought.

However, the Northern Legion were now Garoline's chips, and they now supported Prince Barond.

On the other hand, the Central Cavalry and Barry were close to Prince Barond. There was even less hope in gaining their support.

At present, the Northwest Legion's Regiment Commander, Elliot, was the only one left who originated from the Imperial Guards Central Command. His support would be desired, but now that Reuenthal was watching them in the Northwest, it was improbable for the Northwest Legion to be transferred back. Besides that, the Northwest Legion was already crippled after the war. How much strength could it have left?

The Southern Legion was also a part of the Central Command's traditional power base. However, there was still no news from Rody ever since he left for the South.

The Northern Legion had already started to assemble. Although they had not taken the next step, only God knew when the Southern Legion would arrive at the Imperial Capital.

Nicole sighed as she tried to forget about these worries and kept a calm expression. She understood clearly that she was now the backbone of her faction. The Empress was totally reliant on Nicole, making Nicole feel very uneasy deep in her heart...

Are my actions correct? After all, that child is Seth's! It is not of royal blood! Prince Barond is the one holding legitimate claim to the throne. I feel like I am scheming for the throne...

"Seth. Is this part of your scheme? Although you have left, everything is still going according to your plans. You have tied everybody to your war chariot."

Nicole hesitated again and sighed.

Should it really be like this?

...

The soldiers responsible for guarding the Imperial Capital had all already been switched with the soldiers from the Central Cavalry. A group of soldiers wearing the uniform of the 'Lightning God's Whip' guarded the four gates. They also strictly examined each person passing through the gates. Prince Barond had originally intended to ban all movements through the gates of the Imperial Capital. However, Garoline gave a different suggestion, and Prince Barond dropped that idea.

After all, he had not started a coup and had not rebelled. The Emperor was also still alive. If they locked up the Imperial Capital, their opponents would spread gossips.

That afternoon, at the South gate of the Imperial Capital, there were more than a dozen horses traveling on a road. In the front was an extremely fat man. Behind him was a pale-faced young man that looked frustrated and dejected. Behind the two of them were about a dozen men with cold eyes and indifferent expressions.

The fat man looked at the distant city wall and then turned back to look at the pale young man. "Little bat, is that the Imperial Capital? We are about to arrive. Why are you still so crestfallen?"

The young man gave a wry smile and replied, "You would naturally feel relaxed but I... Sigh... I did so many things for you and am already considered a traitor to Master Simao. If I get caught... Well, do you even know what the punishment would be for us vampires?"

The fat man raised his eyebrows and said, "I want to see who is so bold. Right now, you are one of my followers. Who would dare to harm you?"

He then looked at the city walls and laughed. "I wonder what that Rody is currently doing. Is he locked in Nicole's embrace, kissing? Sigh... That boy looks honest, but he is also quite a playboy. A few days ago, he sent a woman to me. How annoying... If it was not because I glared angrily at her and sent her on her way, I do not

even know when I would reach the Imperial Capital!"

The fat man then looked at the young man again and shouted, "Tell me! What about that boy Darke? When will he recover?"

The young man rolled his eyes and replied, "He would recover in about seventeen or eighteen days."

The fat man felt relieved and said, "That's good. I hope Darke stays that way for a few more days. That way, he can delay those two troublesome women."

He looked at the city walls again and laughed. "I wonder if the Imperial Palace is really interesting... If the Emperor dares to attack Rody, I would really burn the palace down! Hahaha! Taking a dozen vampires to attack the palace would certainly be interesting!"

The young man then criticized, "The Empire has an association of magicians and the Church. The Pope is also in the Imperial Capital. If you tried to do anything, you would be asking to die."

The fat man hmped coldly. "What Magician Association? Do you think a group of magicians is worth paying attention to? As for the Pope, we could just burn down the church. There is nothing that could not be handled! What about you? These two days, you have started to talk back. Are you looking for more trouble with me?"

The young man trembled and forced out a smile as he said, "How could I be so daring? Master Sky, you are like the sun while I am just a firefly. How could I be so daring to try and compete with you?"

Sky felt happy and was about to laugh. Suddenly, he heard someone jump out of the side of the road.

The clothes that person wore were mismatched and looked as if he had stolen them from somewhere. The man's face was out of shape; his eyes and nose were crooked. His arms were different in

size, and one of his legs was shorter than the other.. He went to the middle of the road and shouted, "I am the one that opened this road. I am the one that planted that tree. If you want to pass here..."

He looked around for a moment and then shouted, "Leave behind a horse!"

There was a moment of silence.

Suddenly, Sky burst into laughter. He laughed so wildly that he almost fell off his horse. The young man also laughed and looked at the person standing in the middle of the road in pity...

The man stood calmly in the middle of the road and did not get angry when he saw Sky laugh. He calmly stood there until they stopped laughing. After that, he asked. "Why are you laughing? Is it ridiculous that this old man is asking you for a horse?"

Sky raised his eyebrow. The young man then rushed forward and stretched out a claw towards that person...

There was a miserable cry as the young man flew back, and his body ended up hanging on the tree at the roadside!

"Hm?" Sky's eyes gleamed. He showed a strange expression and stared at the person obstructing the road. He could not help but comment, "A little robber like you actually have some ability..."

The man pursed his lips for a moment and then he laughed. "In that case, give me a horse. Or at least, let me ride with you."

Sky's eyes opened wide as he held back his laughter. "What did you say?"

The man sighed and loudly replied, "The gates to the Imperial Capital are strictly guarded. I cannot fly around during the day and the guards also would not let me in with my current appearance... That is why, I am asking you for help."

He then whimpered and just sat on the floor, with a posture that

seems to say: If you don't agree then you cannot pass.

Sky rubbed his nose hard. He then laughed and said, "I can see that you are quite skilled. Even if the gate is blocked, I am sure that you could fly in or break your way in anyway."

The man rolled his eyes and looked at Sky as if he was talking to an idiot. He then spoke in a strange voice, "Don't you know that the guards are more strict in the Imperial Capital right now? It is said that vampires had attacked the Imperial Capital a few days ago. Now the Church have dispatched a lot of magicians to patrol the town. Fly in? The moment you start flying, you would be surrounded by magicians! It is not hard to get into the city, but it would create an uproar. Why would I do that?"

After that the man whispered to himself, "Are the people with strong domains all brainless?"

Sky's eyes grew wide. "What did you say?"

The man laughed again. "Guys, lend me a horse and let me follow you into the city. It would be beneficial for all of us..."

Sky's was getting more and more curious. He was itching to beat up the man in front of him. "Should I let you live now that you tried to rob me?"

However, this person's mysterious and strange ways made Sky extremely curious. Sky's curiosity was his most important desire. It was also his biggest weakness.

"Fine!" The fat man finally gritted his teeth and waved his hand. "I will give you a horse and let you follow us into the city. I want to see what other tricks you have. The weirder it is, the more interested I am."

Hearing this, the man on the ground laughed. He then jumped up and immediately sat on the pale young man's horse.

Sky then looked at the young man hanging on the tree and shouted, "Little bat! Quickly catch up with us if you are not dead! If

you are late, I am going to punish you!"

After that, the horses resumed their journey to the Imperial Capital.

The weird man sat on his horse behind Sky. That person sighed and said, "How interesting. A fat person with an funny mind but a strong domain. What happened in the Imperial Capital? Sigh, Rody. Why have you not shown up? This old man is going to give you a surprise!"

...

Master Autumn was outside the hall calmly looking at the clouds. Although he looked calm, his heart was in a turmoil. In the past few days, he did not even dare to look at the Empress. He felt distressed every time he saw the Empress' resentful expression.

At some point in time, Nicole looked at Master Autumn's back and sighed.

Master Autumn suddenly turned and smiled. He then asked, "Miss Nicole. Why are you sighing?"

Nicole's charming face showed a trace of sadness. She whispered. "Master Autumn. I know you feel bitter. You have chased Seth away for Her Highness' benefit. However, you must know that Her Highness does not really hate you. A woman in love cannot be reasoned with."

Master Autumn shook his head and lightly replied, "I know. I know about this. I am not upset because of her. I am upset because of myself."

"Yourself?"

"Yes." Master Autumn looked at the sky and smiled bitterly. "I was laughing at myself. I have mastered the sword and reached the apex of warriors. I have reached a place others could only dream about. The world is big; I could go anywhere. However, I continue to keep watching over her, here, in the Imperial Palace. Don't you

think that it is just sad? So what if I have exceptional power and strength? People's feelings are fragile. Even if you could control the world, you cannot control your own heart."

Nicole was silent. She followed Master Autumn's gaze and looked at the clouds helplessly.

She then remembered the present situation. Would things really go according to Seth's scheme?

At that moment, the sound of hurried footsteps came from behind her. Commander Gordon, in full armor and fully equipped with weapons, strode in and loudly informed Nicole, "Miss! The Pope has arrived. He wishes to see the Empress!"

"The Pope?" Nicole frowned. What is he doing here? Could it be that the Pope who never had any interest in Imperial powers now also want to fight for the throne?

She looked at Master Autumn silently, and then she immediately told Gordon to leave.

A bitter smile appeared at the corner of Master Autumn's lips...

He suddenly remembered what Seth had said before he disappeared. "Master Autumn. I want to warn you that the Pope has long known of your secret."

Master Autumn sighed and smiled. "He already knew? I tried hard to hide my strength for so long and tried not to gain any attention, but he still found out?"

Chapter 160: Skeleton's Body Change

"You mean..." Nicole was surprised as she looked at the Pope, Corsica VI. She could not help but glance back at the Empress.

The white-robed Corsica VI smiled faintly as he gently held his staff. Although he was just standing there, it was as if he was looking down at the two women. He lightly said, "You did not hear wrongly. I came here to send my regards to the Empress as the representative of Church of the Radiant Empire! I came to wish Her Highness the Empress good health and to wish prosperity and good luck to the future Emperor."

Nicole exclaimed, "Your Excellency. Does that mean you are willing to stand by the side of Her Highness the Empress?"

Corsica VI smiled meaningfully and then said, "The God's religion does not interfere with the empire's Imperial monarchy. We are just a group of believers of God. We would not sit by idly if there was anyone that defied God's will or overturned God's authority."

Nicole took a deep breath and asked, "Your Excellency, are you saying that Prince Barond..."

However, Corsica VI no longer spoke. He just looked at the Empress and then nodded his head. After that, he turned away and left.

The Empress was surprised. She looked at Nicole and whispered, "Miss Nicole. Would the Pope really support us?"

Nicole thought for a moment and then replied, "Your Highness. We can believe in the Pope's words. However, we must still take precaution."

Nicole looked at the Empress' dazed expression and sighed. She then whispered, "You should know about the Gods at the Northern Continent."

In the Northern continent, the God's religion had higher authority than the kings from all the countries there. This was because the Northern Roland Continent did not have a strong central power. On the other hand, the strong Radiant Empire existed on the Radiant continent. The Imperial power and the religious power were equally matched, and neither was stronger than the other.

"Could it be that..."

Nicole nodded her head and said softly, "The God's religion constantly say that the people of the Northern Continent are heathens. However, they are actually jealous of the power held by the churches in the Northern Continent! Now, there is a struggle for the throne. The monarchy is currently at its weakest. If the Church wants to expand their influence, there is no better time than now. Prince Barond is an ambitious and strong character. If he succeeds, he would not be manipulated by the Church. On the other hand, if your son were to become the Emperor, the young child would be easily manipulated!"

.....

At that time, Prince Barond was in Marquis Garoline's mansion. Garoline calmly said, "Your Highness. You must keep calm! It is alright even if the Pope had met with the Empress! The Church doesn't normally interfere in the fight for the throne. They would not have an excuse to give their support now! As long as you insist on the inheritance, the Pope would not be able to summon the Flame Warriors against us recklessly! Their support is just to gain an advantage!"

Prince Barond nodded. "Unfortunately, Master Autumn constantly guards the Imperial Palace. Otherwise, we could just assassinate the Empress, and all our problems would be solved!"

Garoline smiled faintly and replied, "Your Highness, it is best not to do all these things! These actions are too obvious and would

affect your future image! Although the other nobles may not say anything, it does not mean that they would be loyal to you. Do you want a complete empire or a fragmented empire?"

Garoline paused for a moment. He then smiled and said, "Your Highness. There is something that you should immediately do."

"What is it?"

Garoline laughed and said, "Don't you have a man working in the court, in the medical office? Although the Emperor's health was not always good, he had suddenly collapsed. It is as if... Hahaha..."

Prince Barond turned gloomy and sneered. "Marquis, you don't have to be so secretive! The past is the past! Now, we stand together, and there is nothing to hide from you! Yes. Some of my people are medical officers. The Emperor's health was not always good because over the last two years, I have given him something that I have specially prepared."

Garoline trembled lightly, but his expression remained the same. He then whispered, "In that case, this must be done immediately! That medical officer must be eliminated immediately! You must not leave any loose ends behind, otherwise your succession may be in danger!"

Prince Barond frowned. "It is not difficult to get rid of him. However, if we get rid of him now, we would no longer know about the Emperor's condition. That is because in these two years, he is the only person I could depend on."

Garoline looked at him with ridiculing eyes and said, "You do not have to worry. You have arranged this for over two years. You no longer need people to report to you about the Emperor's condition. You yourself know what the Emperor eats. Why would you need to worry? We just need to wait for His Majesty to die... then we will immediately take action!"

Prince Barond nodded his head.

Garoline then thought for a moment and said, "Right now, the people with the Empress would be more anxious than us! They are definitely anxious to acquire the title of Crown Prince. What's more, they must do it before the Emperor dies! If the Emperor is dead and the position of Crown Prince is still empty, you would have an excuse to inherit the throne! They would start acting in about two days. We just need to wait and respond."

Before Prince Barond could reply, someone had entered and reported.

"An order came from the Imperial Palace. All nobles and officials in the Imperial Capital are to attend an assembly tomorrow in the Radiant Hall inside the Imperial Palace!"

Prince Barond frowned. "Assembly? What assembly? The Emperor is on his deathbed! How are we to assemble? "

His subordinate did not speak but continued to stand there with his head down.

Garoline waved his hands, prompting the man to leave. He then gave a faint smile and said, "That is an order by the Empress, issued in the name of the Emperor! In accordance with convention, before the Emperor dies, we must notify the other ministers of his illness. Although the news had spread in the past few days, there was no formal notice. I believe that during this assembly, they would first declare that the Emperor would not last. After that, they would declare that the Empress was pregnant and reserve the title of Crown Prince! Even if the title is not reserved, the matter would be put up. Those two women are probably behind this..."

"Hmph!" Prince Barond became gloomy. "Could it be so easy? I could immediately send troops and surround the Imperial Palace. Master Autumn would not be able to stop all of them by himself."

Garoline's expression remained unchanged as he shook his head. "No! You cannot do anything yet. The Emperor is still alive! If you attack the Imperial Palace before the Emperor is dead, it would

become a rebellion! It is perfect if you can get rid of all of them in one swoop, but what if they escape? What if they escape to the Northwest or the South and make a clarion call for all the local garrison soldiers? An all out war would break out in the Empire itself! Let me ask you. Who do you think could rally the army? Do you think the soldiers in the army would choose to follow you or the Tulip Family banner?"

Prince Barond immediately became quiet. He understood that he would not be able to rally the army as well as the Tulip Family. Even if he had two out of the four biggest armies In the Empire, he would not dare to directly start the war.

The Empire has hundreds of thousands of local garrisons in various provinces. Besides that, the Northern Legion and the Central Cavalry were on his side mainly because their commanders were his own people. However, if a war broke out, would those soldiers still listen to him or follow their commander's orders?"

Prince Barond sighed as he thought about this and suddenly looked at Garoline. He then asked, "So according to your judgement, should we go to the Imperial Palace tomorrow?"

Garoline laughed and then said, "Of course, we are going! In fact, they are hoping that we would not go! That way, there would not be anybody objecting when they officially make the child in the Empress' stomach the Crown Prince! We must definitely go tomorrow. At that time, you must insist on the right of succession, and you must not give in! The child is not yet born, so could the nobles trust him? We must present the counter-arguments tomorrow! We can then see who the ministers and nobles support! That is why, you must be aggressive tomorrow. It is fine to also be arrogant and domineering! Tomorrow is the time to show your strength to all in the Imperial Capital! Force them to choose their faction!"

...

That night, two figures appeared at the streets near the Imperial Palace. Under the moonlight, a large and a small shadow moved silently.

"You. First you made me give you a horse. Now you are making me run around with you at night. What are you doing?"

The other person laughed lightly and said, "Look at you, so curious that you cannot hold it in any longer. I did say I am going to do something interesting in the Imperial Capital. You heard me say the word 'interesting', and you decided to follow me around. But now, you have become impatient."

Sky spat and then said, "You are a really strange person. If it was not because you were a little bit interesting, I would have flattened you for making me wait!"

The man then shrugged his shoulders and said, "It is not difficult to flatten me ... You have a strong Domain Force. There are not many in this world that you cannot flatten. However, if you flatten me, you are going to miss something interesting!"

Sky started scratching his cheek in frustration and cursed, "Alright! Do your thing quickly! I don't even know if you are a person or a ghost. It is one thing if you can see that I have a strong Domain Force. However, it is irritating to hear you keep saying 'Domain Force'. Did I write the word 'Domain Force' on my head? Even though you don't have a strong 'Domain Force' yourself, you are also not that weak! I have been feeling you out since we entered the Imperial Capital. Don't think you can hide your strength from me!"

The man laughed again and said, "You are that boy's friend. Coincidentally, I am his friend too. If you really want to help him, I suggest you close your mouth!"

Sky gave him a supercilious look, but he finally kept his mouth shut.

Although the street was not far from the Imperial Palace, it was extremely quiet. Normally, this street would be full of security soldiers patrolling the area even at night.

However, these soldiers had been replaced by the Central Cavalry soldiers. In order to avoid unnecessary conflict, Prince Barond had ordered them not to get too close to the Imperial Palace. Besides that, Nicole had also ordered the Imperial Guards not to step out of the Imperial Palace to avoid unnecessary trouble. As a result, the streets near the palace became a small buffer zone.

"This is the place!" The man suddenly smiled and pointed at a residence. He then rushed up and jumped over the walls. Sky cursed but he decided to follow the man. The house was not big, but the fittings didn't look simple. It seemed like the owner of the residence had a fairly high position. Besides that, living so close to the Imperial Capital also meant that the owner was not a simple person.

Sky and the man had walked two steps in when the man suddenly whispered, "Huh? Strange..."

Sky also nodded and frowned. "Why is there a smell of blood?" He looked at the man beside him and gave a strange smile. "Have you set a trap for me? If this is the case, I will twist your head off!"

The man glanced at him and said, "Shut up, fatty! I don't even know what you use your head for!"

The two then strutted into the courtyard without any attempt to hide themselves. Sky had said, "If anyone spotted us, we could just knock them unconscious with a kick in the head. I never sneak around... ever!"

They followed the stench of blood and entered a room. That was where they saw a corpse.

"Who is this man?" Sky frowned. "Did you drag me around at night to see a dead person?"

The man showed a contemplative expression before looking back at Sky. He then said, "This is a medical officer from the Imperial Palace. Sigh... I did not expect it to be him... Looks like my luck is really good."

I only picked a house at random, and I have already found the house of Prince Barond's spy henchman."

Sky shook his head. "What are you talking about? What do you want to do?"

The man laughed. "What do I want to do? Let me tell you. I want to sneak into the Imperial Palace. I intended to find a medical officer close to the Emperor. After that, I would pose as him to enter the Imperial Palace. This guy is the person I was looking for tonight. I did not expect to find him so coincidentally. From his appearance, I can tell that he has just been killed. Do you understand? The Emperor was fine all this while, but he is suddenly dying. Prince Barond must have ordered this guy to tamper with somethings . This guy is also dead now. He was most likely silenced by Prince Barond. Such a simple matter that an old man like me can easily deduce. Your head is so big..." At this point, the man noticed Sky's resentful expression and changed the topic. "Fatty. Do you want me to show you something interesting?"

Sky coldly grunted.

The man smiled lightly and said, "Let me tell you. I assembled this body of mine together a few days ago. I feel that it is difficult to use because this carcass is... Sigh. On the other hand, that body is good, and the person had just died. Let this old man borrow it!"

At this moment, the man started to laugh in a strange manner.

Sky's face revealed a strange expression and asked, "What did you say? Your current body is... not yours?"

The man smiled as a strange light suddenly shone from his body. His clothes started to gradually break into pieces. His muscles then

started dropping piece by piece to the floor...

Sky was stunned, and his skin broke into goosebumps. He immediately moved far away.

The man continued to laugh until all of the muscles dropped off and revealed a set of skeleton. However, his bones were not white like an ordinary skeleton. Instead, they had a metallic luster.

Sky could not help but murmur, "What the hell. What strange creature are you... I have never seen this... this...this breed!" He then cursed. "Damn! A real ghost."

The skeleton was finally visible in full, and its lower jaw started to move. It looked at the broken body parts on the ground and laughed. After that, it said, "Sigh. I had to use a lot of my power to get that body. Its a pity that I have to abandon it. After all, it was just an experiment."

The skeleton then looked at the dumbstruck Sky and gave a strange laugh. "Fatty, why are you in a daze? You are looking at the results of my long studies! If it was not because I saw that energy conversion of that Mystic Dragon's body in the South, I would not have thought of a way to get a body for myself!"

After that, the skeleton creaked as it walked up to the corpse of the medical officer and a strange light burst from it. After that, the skeleton gradually turned transparent.

The skeleton then lay down on the corpse. Its body became transparent like air and seemed to enter the corpse...

...

In the South, a mighty convoy of cavalry galloped swiftly towards the capital. Leading the cavalry was a blonde young man riding a dark horse. His blue eyes revealed his anxiety. Numerous heavily armed cavalrymen followed tightly right behind him. They followed the leading horse quickly with a resolute expression and a glint in their eyes.

The person on the dark horse was Rody. At that moment, he had once again changed back into Seth's appearance.

As he rode quickly, he could not help but touch his face with one hand. "I really did not expect to need this mask again!"

Chapter 161: Breaking Through!

A huge bell, at the corner of the square of the Imperial Palace was sounded. Two large figures were fiercely striking the bell with a huge hammer, and the sound it gave off felt oppressive. That sound made the nobles standing outside the hall of the Imperial Capital tremble in their hearts.

Imperial Guards, fully armed and in groups, entered the square of the Imperial Palace. They then arranged themselves in a fan-shaped formation in the square. Twenty golden armored guards with battle axes in hand stood solemnly outside the main hall in two rows.

The nobles and ministers of the Empire arranged themselves at the square according to their ranks, waiting...

None of them knew what they were waiting for. However, they all looked at the entrance to the hall above them, knowing that the Emperor would not appear in the hall. The esteemed Emperor, Abbas XI was still bedridden.

After a dignified cry, everybody looked around, and then they saw the Empress slowly walk out from a side entrance of the hall. What surprised everybody was that the Empress was holding the Emperor's Sceptre. That sceptre had six large and dazzling crystals. The Empress held the Sceptre as she slowly walked up the stairs towards the main hall.

The Empress looked pale, but she was still calm. Following behind her was Miss Nicole. Nicole was wearing the Tulip Family's uniform. That uniform was originally meant for men. However, she still looked valiant in it. However, nobody was looking at Nicole. Instead, they were all looking at the Empress' bulging stomach.

The Empress raised her Sceptre and loudly declared, "In the name of the Great Emperor of the Radiant Empire, may God bless

the Radiant Empire forever!"

Everybody looked at the raised Sceptre and immediately bowed their heads as they said, "We pay respects to Your Majesty!"

The Empress looked at the audience. She then looked at Miss Nicole, beside her, and said, "I am sure you all know. His Majesty the Emperor is gravely ill! Today, I summoned all of you to..."

When she had just said that, someone outside the square interrupted. "Put down that Sceptre! That is not something you can hold!"

The sound of leather boots stepping on the ground could be heard. Prince Barond, in military uniform, stepped in with big strides.

Following behind him were Marquis Garoline, the Central Cavalry's Regiment Commander Barry and an army of heavily armed Central Cavalry soldiers.

Her Highness the Empress' expression turned uneasy, and she could not help but look at Miss Nicole. Nicole frowned and nodded her head. She signaled for the Empress to persevere.

Prince Barond walked straight to the bottom of the stairs in the square and loudly shouted at the Empress. "This Sceptre was inherited from my ancestor, Abbas the Great! It symbolizes the Imperial Power of the Flower Thorn Family! You are not qualified to hold it!"

Her Highness the Empress was pale. However, she still managed to reply with Miss Nicole's encouragement. "This Sceptre can only be held by His Majesty. However, His Majesty is currently ill. I am only using this to receive the subjects of the Empire. What is wrong with that?"

Prince Barond coldly said, "Since His Majesty is ill, the most important thing is to treat his illness! However, you have summoned everyone and took His Majesty's sceptre! Have you

forgotten that our ancestor, Abbas the Great, had ordered that women cannot interfere with politics?"

His words were strong willed and disrespectful. His head was held high as he glared at the Empress. The other nobles and ministers on both his sides were all quiet.

The Empress gritted her teeth and softly replied, "His Majesty is on the verge of death. I, as the Empress, have only gathered all the ministers here for a discussion. Is this considered interfering with politics?"

There was some truth in her words. However, the Empress' voice was softer than Prince Barond's, and she was not as imposing.

.

Miss Nicole sighed and then she loudly said, "Your Royal Highness, Her Highness the Empress, has gathered everyone here today, to discuss about His Majesty's health! Your words are too excessive!"

Before Prince Barond could speak, Marquis Garoline, who was behind him, coldly asked, "Miss Nicole, what right do you have to speak here? The head of the Tulip Family should be His Excellency the Duke and not you. You are a woman and have no title. You do not have the right to speak here!"

Miss Nicole coldly replied, "Her Highness the Empress has summoned my brother back to the Imperial Capital. At the moment, he is still on his way. As the eldest daughter of the Tulip Family, I am attending this ceremony on behalf of the Duke. What is wrong with that?"

Prince Barond shook his head, looked at the Empress and coldly said, "Your Highness the Empress, it is not wrong to gather everyone. However, His Majesty is still alive. Are you thinking of using His Majesty's Sceptre and giving orders in his name. Please put down the Sceptre. We can continue to speak after that! You

have no right to hold that! This is a cast-iron order of our great ancestor, and even His Majesty cannot defy!"

The Empress hesitated for a moment and looked at Miss Nicole. Miss Nicole frowned and was about to speak when suddenly they heard a warrior from the square outside shout loudly, "His Highness the Pope has arrived!"

The guards on both sides immediately showed the highest level of respect. They then saw Corsica VI's white clothes flutter in the wind as he entered the square. He was followed by three Bishops.

Prince Barond's eyes immediately turned cold as he turned to look at Corsica VI.

Corsica VI walked towards the crowd and smiled faintly. He then said, "Your Highness the Empress, I apologise for my late arrival."

...

While the Empress and Prince Barond were opposing each other at the square, a man walked towards Abbas XI's sleeping quarters behind the Imperial Palace. He was wearing a medical officer's clothes. His head was held low as he walked past the heavily armed guards.

The elderly magician, Shire, looked at the person that just arrived and frowned. "Medical officer Crewe, you are late! Something was wrong with His Majesty a little while ago. His condition has just stabilized."

The medical officer, Crewe, did not speak but instead, he nodded his head and walked into the room. Elder Shire looked at the medical officer walking into the sleeping quarters of the Emperor. As Crewe passed him, he suddenly felt his body turn cold. He felt that something was wrong. However, when he looked around, he could not find anything suspicious.

The sleeping quarters were quiet. The man walked through two doors and entered a huge room. In the middle of the room was a

large bed surrounded by white curtains. The Emperor could be seen lying down behind the curtains.

There were no sounds in the room except for the Emperor's weak and indistinct breathing, sometimes long and sometimes short.

The medical officer went to the window. He lifted the curtains and stood at the side of the bed. He looked at Abbas XI who was lying on the bed and sighed. "Ah, how pitiful. The dignified Emperor has fallen into such a state... People are such fragile creatures."

"I really cannot understand you..." A voice behind him coldly said, "You wasted so much effort just to enter the Imperial Palace... With our abilities, who could stop us from just walking in?"

A huge and obese figure appeared behind him. That person was Sky.

The medical officer turned around and coldly looked at him. "Do you think everyone is the same as you? People with strong domains... Hmph, if it was not because you learned the 'Blood Escape' technique from the vampire, do you think you could secretly come in here? Besides that, I cannot learn that technique. I do not have a strong domain."

He glanced at Sky and coldly continued, "I know what you wish to say. You wish to say something like 'With your ability, who would dare stop you if you really want to come in here!' Am I right? Or you wanted to say that 'I, Master Sky, never like to sneak around!' Am I right?"

Sky became embarrassed and asked, "How did you know?"

Crewe spat and said, "What else can you think of in that head of yours? Let me tell you. We could get in here because we are lucky. Today, that Elder Shire did not use the see-through spell to look at you. Otherwise, do you think that the 'Blood Escape' you learned in the past few days could easily hide you from others? Did you

think you have mastered the vampires' 'Blood Escape' in just a few days? Besides that, if we got spotted, this entire thing would be a failure! You only know how to use your fist. When will you learn how to use your head as well?"

Sky angrily said, "Stop talking nonsense. We have already entered. What do you want to do? I heard that it is very busy at the square. Rather than looking at this half-dead Emperor, I would rather see what is happening outside!"

Crewe laughed and said, "Look, this is the difference. I use my head, but you use your fist. Although you are stronger than me, but right now, you have to listen to me. Without you, this entire matter is also not possible... Right now, you must guard this place. No matter who tries to come in, you must stop them. Also, you cannot reveal yourself."

"Why?"

Crewe gave a supercilious expression and said, "I obviously cannot be disturbed when I am engaged in my practice. Moreover, if someone were to see this, our plan would fail!"

"Fine!" Sky replied resentfully. "If someone comes in, I will cut off his head and throw it out of the Imperial Palace!"

When the medical officer saw Sky walk out, he sighed and stretched out his hand to gently touch the head of Abbas XI. "Pitiful man, what can you do even if you are an Emperor?"

A bright light appeared from his hands and slowly went into the Emperor's head. The unconscious Emperor then took a deep breath and died.

Crewe shook his head. "I have killed a person... I have finally killed someone personally... Sigh, this is what it feels like to kill someone."

He showed a strange smile, and then his body was slowly shrouded in light.

Meanwhile, a cloud of dust appeared in the distance on the road to the South gate of the Imperial Capital. A continuous drumming sound of galloping horses came nearer and nearer...

The Central Cavalry soldiers guarding the South gate were shocked. They immediately formed a line on the walls, and a team of archers readied their arrows.

On the main road, the cavalry approached quickly from a distance. The one leading the cavalry was holding the banner of the Tulip Family.

Rody saw the city gate in the distance, and he shouted loudly. The cavalry then quickened their pace and rushed towards the city gate.

There was a loud horn and a group of soldiers wearing the uniform of the 'Lightning God's Whip' came from inside the gate. They then charged towards the cavalry.

Rody waved his hand, and his subordinates all stopped. At that moment, thousands of cavalymen were glaring murderously at the team of Central Cavalry soldiers.

"Who is it?" The captain of the Central Cavalry asked.

"Nonsense!" Commander Sieg ran to the front and shouted, "Can't you see the banner? His Excellency the Duke of the Tulip Family has returned to the Imperial Capital! Step aside quickly!"

The captain of the Central Cavalry started to sweat, but he still loudly shouted, "I recognize you! You are Commander Sieg! However, General Barry had ordered us not to let anyone in or out of the Imperial Capital today! Right now, the Imperial Capital has been taken over by us, the 'Lightning God's Whip'! You would need Prince Barond's personal order to enter the city!"

"Lightning God's Whip?" Sieg glared at the other party coldly. "You dare to call yourselves the 'Lightning God's Whip'? Step aside, quickly! Do you dare stop the Duke of the Tulip Family?"

The captain was sweating profusely as he said, "The Prince has ordered us to guard the city gate and not let anyone in. If I were to let you guys in, I would be committing a capital offence, punishable by death!"

Rody slowly rode his horse to the front and coldly said, "I am the Duke of the Tulip Family. I have an order from Her Highness the Empress to return to the Imperial Capital! Is Prince Barond trying to rebel? What right does he have to give orders?"

As they talked, a ruckus could be heard at the city gate. After that, a group of cavalries appeared and entered battle formation to block the outside of the gate. When the Central Cavalry saw that the situation was not good, they had immediately sent out a big cavalry from inside the gate.

Thousands of cavalrymen prepared for a battle as the huge city gates behind them slowly closed.

Rody raised his eyebrows and coldly asked, "What? You dare to fight me?"

The leader of the Central Cavalry's cavalryman then ran out and loudly said, "Your Excellency the Duke, I am the Central Cavalry's Commander, Saunder. You have met me before..."

Rody glanced at him. This was the person he met when he was choosing the soldiers for the battle in the Northwest.

Commander Saunder walked forward a few steps and shouted, "Your Excellency the Duke, it is not that we do not want to let you enter the city. However, we have orders from Prince Barond and General Barry had also given the order not to let you all in. I suggest... you station your soldiers outside the city, while you enter the city by yourself!"

Sieg glared at him murderously and said, "Saunder, do you think that you can stop His Excellency the Duke just by bringing a lot of people?"

Rody was feeling very anxious and immediately shouted, "Move aside immediately! Commander Saunder, you better believe that I and the Wolf Fang can easily wipe out your soldiers!"

Sieg then took a deep breath as he raised his scimitar and shouted, "Wolf Fang!"

At that moment, thousands of scimitars were drawn from their scabbards. Thousands of voices then shouted in unison, "Kill!"

The entire team of Wolf Fang stepped forward at the same time.

Saunder and the other cavalrymen immediately felt a strong killing intent. Some of their hands had started to tremble, and fear was visible in their eyes. These Central Cavalry soldiers were not the elite 'Lightning God's Whip' from many years ago. How could they be compared to the Wolf Fang soldiers who had fought in the Northwest region?

The killing intent from the Wolf Fang soldiers who had fought on a real battlefield had terrified them.

Saunder sweated and trembled. "Your Excellency the Duke, this is..."

"Shut up!" Rody coldly shouted, "I am going to count to three. If you do not let us pass, we will break in!"

"One!"

Thousands of horses stepped forward in tandem.

"Two!"

Numerous scimitars were slowly raised. Under the reflection of the rays from the sun, a cold light was seen.

"Three!" Rody raised his eyebrow. He pulled out his scimitar and was about to raise it to give the order to charge. At that time, he heard the opposing cavalry suddenly cry out. The battle formation of the Central Cavalry then became chaotic.

Numerous horses ran in different directions as the cavalrymen

scattered. Some of the officers had even abandoned their comrades and ran away.

These people understood clearly. If a fight were to break out, the thousands of them would be wiped out by their opponent within a short time. What kind of troop was the Wolf Fang? Who was the Duke of the Tulip Family?

Saunder became deathly pale. Even though he did not run away, his legs were shivering. "Let... Let them pass!"

The Central Cavalry then messily scattered onto both sides. Rody did not bother looking at these people. He rode towards the city wall and looked up at the nervous archers on the walls. He then shouted, "Open the gates!"

Saunder trembled and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, they will not open the gates... The one who opens the gates would suffer the death penalty..."

Rody laughed coldly. He suddenly took a spear from a soldier beside him. Golden fighting energy burst out from his body. The spear in his hand transformed into a fiery dragon as he shot it out.

There was a loud explosion as the iron gate fell apart. The horses neighed in alarm. Rody then pulled out the Dragon Fang sword and coldly shouted at the archers, "If you have the courage, you can shoot your arrows!"

After that, Rody took the lead and rushed into the city.

Behind him, thousands of the Wolf Fang cavalry followed, creating a huge cloud of dust as they rushed into the Imperial Capital...

Chapter 162: To Behead

There was an argument in the palace square. Prince Barond and the Empress were arguing fiercely while Nicole and Garoline tried to add a few words every once in a while.

These two sides were fighting for the throne.

The Empress said that the Emperor was dying and they should immediately establish the Crown Prince's position. She then said that her unborn child should inherit the throne.

On the other hand, Prince Barond insisted that the Emperor was still alive and that the Empress did not have the right to decide on the Crown Prince's position. Nicole then said that it was logical for the prince to inherit the throne. Garoline immediately refuted her words. He said that unless the Emperor himself made a declaration, the prince was undeserving of the Crown Prince title.

Prince Barond was extremely determined. He drew his sword and fiercely thrust it into the ground. He then shouted, "The Empire is the greatest kingdom founded by my ancestor, Abbas the Great! How could you women usurp it! Now that His Majesty is unconscious, are you going to manipulate Abbas the Great's descendants?"

The Empress turned pale. Corsica VI suddenly said, "Usurp?"

He suddenly took a step forward and coldly looked at Prince Barond. He raised his voice and coldly said, "Your Royal Highness. Did you just say 'usurp'? Let me tell you the meaning of that word!"

The leader of the God's religion in the Radiant Empire had a dignified gaze. He slowly said, "According to the laws of the Radiant Empire, the Emperor of the Radiant Empire must be a faithful believer! The Emperor must believe in the Almighty. Even Abbas the Great was a faithful believer!"

His voice echoed over the square as he coldly looked at Prince

Barond. Prince Barond felt a chill and could not help but step back. It seemed like he could not endure the gaze of the Pope.

Corsica VI coldly continued. "Prince Barond. You just said 'usurp'. Let me ask you. What is usurpation? Is the Emperor's and the Empress' son inheriting the throne considered usurpation? Are you saying that the throne should not be inherited by their child but instead by his brother - you?"

Corsica VI's voice was oppressive. Prince Barond had a strange expression. He looked at Garoline who was beside him and remembered that he needed to be tough. He immediately and proudly said, "The baby is not born yet, but His Majesty may not last. Are you saying we should give this throne to a baby that is not even born yet?"

A lot of the nobles nodded their heads slightly upon hearing these words. It would not be justified for an unborn baby to inherit the throne of a huge Empire. Although it was the Emperor's son, if the Emperor died they would have to leave the throne empty for some time. Even if they had the succession ceremony after the child was born, how could the baby manage a huge Empire?

Corsica VI nodded his head and smiled. "Very well, Prince Barond. You have finally spoken the truth. Do you believe that you are the one that should inherit the throne?"

Before Prince Barond could reply, Corsica VI's expression changed. He became fiercer and louder as he said, "In that case, let me ask you in the name of God. Prince Barond! Are you faithful to God? Are you wholeheartedly filled with faith and respect for the Almighty?"

Prince Barond's face looked unnatural. However, he spoke loudly in front of all the powerful nobles and ministers and said, "Of course! I am!"

The Pope then laughed coldly.

He then slowly said, "Prince Barond. You are committing blasphemy! Your heart and your actions are all a blasphemy to God! Even when you said the word 'faith', it is a blasphemy to God!"

Corsica VI then coldly said, "Prince Barond. Let me ask you. A vampire appeared at your residence that day. How would you explain that? On that day, a dragon's presence, something that could only appear at the heathen lands in the North, had also appeared in the Empire, in your residence. How would you explain that? You said you are a faithful believer, but on the other hand, are you conspiring with the evil vampires? Or are you conspiring with the heathens in the North?"

Prince Barond's face turned red as he loudly shouted, "How could I conspire with vampires? That day, the vampires attacked my home and destroyed my castle! How could you say that I am conspiring with vampires?"

Corsica VI coldly said, "Very well! You deny it! You are saying that the despicable vampires had attacked your castle, and it was destroyed by them in that battle. So, you are not really conspiring with the vampires?"

Prince Barond immediately said, "Correct!"

Corsica VI then looked at him mockingly and coldly said, "However, the vampires were not the only ones that appeared at your home. There was also the presence of a dragon! You said that the vampires had attacked your castle. Could it be that the dragon helped you defend your castle? So, what is your relationship with the dragons and the heathens in the North?"

Prince Barond was stunned. He opened his mouth and shouted. "Your Excellency! You keep saying that I have committed blasphemy, but do you have any evidence? I have no relationship with these two groups!"

Corsica Vi then coldly said, "Are you saying you have no

relationship with them despite them fighting in front of your residence and destroying it?"

The Pope then raised his voice and shouted, "So why did these two groups choose to fight in front of your home amongst all the other noble mansions? Who among them is your ally? Who is your enemy?"

Barond became angry and shouted, "Your Excellency! You claim that I am colluding with the heathens, but do you have any evidence? Did I commit blasphemy just because you said so? Is the Church trying to interfere with the Royal Family's power struggle? Could it be that you are ambitious and want to seize power for yourself?"

Corsica VI's eyes turned cold as he said, "We are servants of God and are not interested in the power struggle of the Empire. However, we will still bring to trial those who are blasphemous!"

Garoline then coldly said, "Your Excellency. In fact, you do not have any evidence. You cannot accuse the Prince of our Empire based on your words alone."

These words were very high-sounding. It had inadvertently brought into focus that there was a boundary between the Empire and the Church. It implied that the Pope had no right to accuse Prince Barond of the crime. After all, Prince Barond was the Emperor's brother. Only the Emperor had the right to judge him. That was unless the Pope now placed the Church's powers above the Emperor's.

How could Corsica VI be fooled? If he continued his inquiry this way, it would imply that the Church had more authority than the Emperor. That meant he would also offend all the nobles...

Corsica VI lightly said, "I am not putting the Prince on trial here. However, there are too many doubts in this matter. The Church will properly investigate this matter... However, until this matter is cleared, the Church will refrain from placing our confidence in

the Prince."

This statement immediately made it very clear that the Church did not support Prince Barond inheriting the throne. The crowd looked at Prince Barond with a puzzled expression. Ever since the Empire was founded, none of the Emperors had offended the God's religion before their ascension.

Prince Barond was extremely angry, but he laughed. He pulled out his sword from the ground and said, "Is the Church trying to step in while the Thorn Flower Family is in process of passing down the throne? Are you plotting to grab supreme powers in the Empire? Your Excellency! If the Church really want to plot against the Thorn Flower Family, you better ask for permission from the descendant of Abbas the Great!"

He held the sword firmly in his hands and shouted, "At this moment, the Emperor's condition is still uncertain! The Empress had gathered everyone here to choose a Crown Prince! Nobody can claim the throne without His Majesty's order! Your Excellency! Even if you are the leader of God's religion, you do not have a say in this matter!"

He pointed the longsword at the Empress and shouted, "Put down the Sceptre. Otherwise, not only will we refuse to talk about the Crown Prince! We will be talking about your usurpation of the throne!"

Suddenly, there was a strong breeze as a slender figure appeared in front of Prince Barond. His white hair fluttered in the wind. Master Autumn coldly said, "Prince, Your Highness. Please put down your sword! It is treason to point your sword at Her Highness the Empress!"

Although Prince Barond was agitated, he was now confronting the strongest warrior in the Empire. He felt afraid. Although he did not put down his sword, he took two steps back.

He slowly retreated and shouted, "The Lightning God's Whip is

watching outside the Imperial Palace! Without His Majesty's order, I will not recognize anybody as the Crown Prince! If you fancy the throne, you must know that the Lightning God's Whip that is loyal to the Thorn Flower Family had pledged to protect the legitimacy of the Thorn Flower Family! Even if you are an Empress, I will still send you to the guillotine!"

"How bold!" Master Autumn suddenly lifted one hand. Prince Barond then grunted as the longsword in his hand flew away. He fell backward and landed in the arms of several officers behind him.

Master Autumn stood unafraid and coldly said, "I am the Chief Warrior of the Imperial Palace! My duty is to defend the palace! Prince Barond. You have surrounded the Imperial Palace with soldiers. Do you intend to harm the Empress?"

Prince Barond struggled to stand and was about to speak. However, Garoline gave him a meaningful glance. Prince Barond then understood and stepped back.

He saw Master Autumn standing in front with a murderous aura. His heart felt cold. If he was dead, everything would be over. If his opponent made Master Autumn kill him, at most, Master Autumn would be punished. The Chief Warrior of the Imperial Palace in exchange for the throne would be a good bargain.

Prince Barond felt even more afraid and moved behind his subordinates. Master Autumn then smiled coldly and stretched out his hand. Whoop! Prince Barond's sword that had fallen to the ground automatically flew towards Master Autumn's hand.

With the sword in hand, Master Autumn shouted as he pointed the sword at Prince Barond, "Prince. Please remove the soldiers outside the Imperial Palace! Otherwise, I will have to arrest you as a traitor!"

Nicole was also surprised. The plan for that day did not require Master Autumn to raise his hands. However, she noticed that

Master Autumn was covered with a murderous aura and knew that he was not pretending.

Could it be... Does he want to take this opportunity to kill Prince Barond?

No! Nicole immediately thought of the possibility and shouted. No matter what, Prince Barond has not openly rebelled. He is still the Prince of the Empire! Even if killing him would solve the problem, Master Autumn would be charged for killing a Royal Family member!

Nicole started to sweat and was about to speak. She then heard Master Autumn say, "Miss Nicole. After I kill Prince Barond, all the fault would be pushed to me! After Prince Barond is dead, the only heir remaining would be in the Empress' stomach! Even if others criticized, they would not be able to do anything! After killing Prince Barond, I will take my own life! All the crimes would be mine! My life in exchange for the Empress' safety! I have already decided. Please do not say anything more!"

Nicole's expression changed. She knew that Master Autumn used a secret technique to communicate with her. She subconsciously tried to speak out loud but then she found that she was immobilized. She could neither move nor speak.

Nicole was astonished. She did not know how Master Autumn accomplished this. Her eyes turned to look at the Empress and saw that the Empress also had an expression of fear. Nicole then knew that Master Autumn had also immobilized the Empress.

Master Autumn slowly walked towards Prince Barond and spoke softly, "Prince Barond. Please give up. You have disrespected the Empress and illegally mobilized the soldiers outside the Imperial Palace. You have already committed the crime of plotting a rebellion!"

Prince Barond then shouted an order and two soldiers, in armor, rushed forward. They drew their swords at the same time to attack

Master Autumn, each from one side.

The surrounding nobles and ministers were speechless. They did not expect these people to suddenly start fighting. Almost all of them immediately started to retreat in fear. A few military generals continued to stand there. Their hands were on their swords as they vigilantly watched the situation at the scene. Two of them had, intentionally or otherwise, moved to Nicole's side to shield her with their bodies and protect the eldest daughter of the Tulip Family.

Nobody actually saw clearly what Master Autumn did. They could only hear a silent hum as the two warriors sent out by Prince Barond flew away.

Master Autumn then coldly said, "Prince Barond. Those two men have already reached the rank of Grade 4 swordsmen. I believe they are not ordinary officers! Do you have some kind of plot for taking such masters into the Imperial Palace?"

Prince Barond turned pale. At that moment, two other men immediately took out their wands and started to chant some spells.

Master Autumn raised his eyebrows and sneered. "Magicians. It looks like you have some very strong subordinates."

Two magic fireballs had been thrown at Master Autumn. The magicians also knew that the two simple magic fireballs could only slow down Master Autumn at most. They immediately pulled Prince Barond out of there and headed for the square. On the other hand, Garoline had already started hiding for some time. He had a plan and hid behind some Elders from the Church.

Master Autumn deflected the two fireballs with his longsword and then rushed forward. He had instantly reappeared at the square outside and in front of Prince Barond's group!

Master Autumn coldly said with a murderous expression, "Prince Barond. Please do not resist! Nobody can stop me when I have a

sword in my hand!"

Master Autumn waved the light-sword lightly. At the same time, the two magicians created a defensive curtain of light. Ting! The curtain of light disintegrated the moment the sword touched it. The expressions of these two magicians changed as they spat out blood.

Master Autumn's sword did not stop there but continued towards Prince Barond's head. Prince Barond cried out and a burst of fighting energy immediately appeared. He grabbed a long sword from his subordinate and, gritting his teeth, blocked the attack.

Ting! Prince Barond's longsword immediately broke. He crashed heavily on the floor and spat out some blood.

Master Autumn took a deep breath and attacked Prince Barond again. Prince Barond rolled away in desperation. The sword grazed his face as it stabbed into the ground. The two warriors that were flung away earlier had already gotten up and picked up their swords from the ground. At the same time, they started using fighting energy and rushed at Master Autumn again.

Master Autumn sneered and warded off his opponents using only his hands! There were only a couple of clashing sounds as the two warriors continually retreated. Finally, their fighting energy was exhausted by Master Autumn, and they fell to the ground feeling dejected.

Suddenly, a strong breeze came from behind. The two magicians had created a wall of raging flames. These flames rolled quickly towards Master Autumn. A cold glint flashed in Master Autumn's eyes as he swiped his palm firmly at the fire wall. A huge blade of light immediately flashed out towards the wall of fire.

The blade of light and the fire wall collided. After that, there was a loud explosion as they both disintegrated. Sparks flew everywhere, causing the audience to flee in fear. Numerous soldiers had gathered. However, these were Imperial Guards.

Without any command from the Empress, they only stood around her, protecting her with their shields.

Prince Barond exclaimed loudly, "Empress! How dare you give the order to kill me during His Majesty's absence! Even if you are an Empress, you will get the death penalty for killing a member of the Royal Family!"

Master Autumn then laughed coldly. "Prince Barond. You do not need to shout. The Empress did not order me to kill you! I am just a warrior attempting to arrest you. I may end up killing you when you resisted. The Empress is not guilty! I, alone, will take the blame!"

A brilliant light flashed as Prince Barond felt a chill in his bones. His whole body stiffened and was unable to move. Feeling a sense of despair, he closed his eyes and prepared to die.

Chapter 163: God's Vanquish Spell

Master Autumn swung his sword, but he suddenly felt that something fiercely struck his sword. He was startled when he saw Pope Corsica VI, tightly holding his staff and standing in front of Prince Barond. Pope Corsica VI had blocked Master Autumn's sword with his staff.

"Your Highness the Pope, have you forgotten your words? Why are you suddenly protecting him?" Master Autumn's face sank.

Prince Barond frantically hid behind the Pope. The Bishops positioned themselves around

Master Autumn, surrounding him with a triangular formation.

Corsica VI lightly replied, "Master Autumn, do you really think I came here today just to watch Her Highness the Empress and Prince Barond compete for the throne?"

Master Autumn's expression slightly changed. "What?"

Pope Corsica VI smiled. "If it was just for that, why would I need to bring three Bishop Elders with me?"

His smile seemed gloomy as he said, "Master Autumn, my other reason for coming here today is you!"

After listening to that, Master Autumn narrowed his eyes and coldly looked at the Pope. "What do you mean?"

Corsica VI looked from afar at the Empress, who was standing on the steps in front of the hall, and lightly said, "Didn't the Empress tell you what I said?" He then smiled meaningfully and continued, "Yesterday, during my meeting with the Empress, I mentioned that if anyone wants to disobey God's will or subvert his divine authority, then the Church would not sit idly by and do nothing!"

After saying that, his smile gradually faded. He looked at Master Autumn with eyes as sharp as knives. "Master Autumn, have you

forgotten your true identity?"

Master Autumn's eyes also turned sharp, and he suddenly laughed. "Good! You actually know my secret!" He coldly looked at the Bishop Elders surrounding him and said, "In other words, you want to take this opportunity to remove me!"

Corsica VI smiled and replied, "That's right!"

Master Autumn took a deep breath and stepped back a few steps. He steadied his body and sighed. "I understand!"

He gave a sarcastic smile and said, "Now is the best time to get rid of me!"

He glared and continued, "You did not find trouble with me before this because of my identity as an Imperial warrior! Besides that, you already knew for a long time that Prince Barond was planning to become Emperor. You relied on me to protect the Emperor and the Empress to preserve the balance between both sides. Am I right?"

Master Autumn continued to sneer. "But now, the Emperor is dying. The God's religion is now ready to interfere with the struggle for the Imperial Power. With your support, Prince Barond is considered to have already failed today! That is why... My existence is no longer necessary..."

He then laughed and said, "However, you cannot let Prince Barond die! If Prince Barond is dead, the greatest threat to the Empress would disappear. At that time, the Empress would no longer need the power of the God's religion. That is why, you can help the Empress to suppress Prince Barond, but you cannot let Prince Barond die! You want Prince Barond to stay alive so that the Empress would always have an enemy within view! That way, the God's religion can control the Empress!"

Master Autumn mockingly laughed and said, "That is the reason why I must die! Once I am dead, there is no more master around

the Empress. She then can only rely on the God's' religion... Haha haha..." Master Autumn then laughed wildly. "Corsica VI! You gave me too much credit! Is my life really that important to you?"

Corsica VI gave a solemn expression and lightly said, "Of course, it is important! Your existence is the greatest blasphemy here..." He then lowered his voice and said, "You... descendant of the Devil's clan!"

Master Autumn trembled. He gazed bitterly and murmured, "Descendant of the Devil's clan... Descendant of the Devil's clan..." He then slowly started to laugh and said, "What is a God? What is a Devil? Do you mean that all of Kara's clan is definitely part of the Devil's clan in your eyes?"

He became angry and coldly looked at the surrounding Bishop Elders. He then softly said, "Corsica VI, do you think that you could kill me with so few of you?"

A flame suddenly burst out on his sword. Then the whole sword started to burn with a raging fire.

Corsica VI lightly said, "After we kill you, the last trace of Kara's blood in the continent would be extinguished! You are not an ordinary human but a descendant of Kara! In the name of God, we absolutely cannot let you live in this world!"

The Bishop Elders then stepped back at the same time and stood beside the Pope. They raised their staffs, and a white and holy light appeared without any incantations. This white light covered Master Autumn!

The white light seemed to have a special effect on Master Autumn. When the light touched him, his body immediately emitted a white gas. His clothes also started to burn.

Corsica VI coldly said, "Master Autumn, this is the God's religion's special technique, 'Light of the Matrix' handed down specifically to deal with the people from Kara's clan!"

Master Autumn trembled and grimaced in pain. He slowly stepped back as if he was braving the white light. After that, he slowly sat down.

One of the Bishop Elders shouted, "Master Autumn, surrender quickly! Accept God's judgment! Even if you are a Sacred Swordsman, you are unable to resist the might of God!" The other Bishop Elders also berated Master Autumn.

Master Autumn sat on the ground and revealed a strange expression. Suddenly, he placed his sword horizontally over his chest and smiled mockingly. "Sacred Swordsman? The strongest warrior on the continent and the first Sacred Swordsman in centuries... What a joke!"

He then lightly swung his sword as if he was swatting flies. The light from the religious people that had enveloped him gradually dissipated wherever it was touched by the flames from his sword.

Master Autumn then slowly stood up. His original gray robes disintegrated and revealed the warrior's clothing underneath it. He then coldly looked at the Pope and whispered, "Did you say God's judgment? In that case, show me the power of your God!"

Master Autumn's aura suddenly burst out. Waves of energy shot out all around from his body like sharp arrows. For some time, the dust at the square flew about, causing the people to cover their eyes. Miss Nicole suddenly felt her body become lighter. Master Autumn's immobility command was disabled. She immediately opened her mouth to shout but unexpectedly a blast of air blew into her open mouth. In the end, she could not say a single word.

Her Highness the Empress was closely guarded by a few Imperial Guards around her as they retreated into the hall. The surrounding people, originally scattered in the square had also retreated to the hall. Only Master Autumn and the people from God's religion remained in the middle of the square. Prince Barond was also guarded by a few men, and they hid in a corner.

Nicole breathed and tried to create a curtain of light, but she soon found that she could not use any magic. While she was dumbstruck, a few people from the military pulled her up the stairs and into the hall.

Master Autumn was surrounded by a ball of light. The ball of light grew bigger and gradually, the entire square was covered with it. The square was also filled with Master Autumn's murderous aura.

Master Autumn then smiled coldly. "Corsica VI, didn't you say you want to kill me? Go ahead and try! However, let me tell you. In here, you would not be able to use any spells!"

The Pope's eyes glinted as he showed a strange expression. He suddenly sighed and said in a low voice, "Domain Force! You actually have already achieved Domain Force!"

Somewhere, far behind the Imperial Palace, Sky was yawning as he sat on the ground. Suddenly, he sensed something, and his expression changed. He suddenly jumped up from the ground. The aura was very powerful. It was filled with an overwhelming killing intent and seemed to have filled from heaven to earth. Sky's expression turned weird.

"Domain Force! There are people who have actually obtained Domain Force in the Imperial Capital?"

Pope Corsica VI looked coldly at Master Autumn, who was standing in front of him. Master Autumn looked majestic like a god holding a sword. His white hair and clothes were fluttering in the wind. He also had an extremely murderous glare that forced people to look down.

"Domain Force!" Pope Corsica VI sighed. "Master Autumn, it looks like I guessed right. You already have obtained a strong Domain Force..." He spoke calmly and softly, "However, I still came here knowing that you have obtained Domain Force. This is because, I have a way to make sure you die here, today!"

Master Autumn was stunned for a moment and then he sneered. "Kill me here? What a joke! Show me what you can do!"

Master Autumn slashed the sword in his hand like lightning, displaying his powerful might, like that of the legendary gods.

However, Corsica VI just stood there and closed his eyes. Master Autumn's sword then suddenly stopped in midair. It was as if there was an invisible wall and the sword could not go any further.

Pope Corsica VI then started to emit a light. This light shrouded him and the several of the surrounding Bishop Elders.

Master Autumn's expression suddenly changed. "Impossible! How could you use spells here? Inside my domain, nobody can use spells!"

The light from the Pope's body grew stronger and stronger. Several Bishop Elders sat on the ground and tightly held their staffs. Beams of light flowed from the staffs and into the Pope's body. Corsica VI's body then became brighter. Finally, his whole body turned into a dazzling transparent light shadow.

Corsica VI then spoke. His voice sounded as if it came from heaven.

"True, inside your domain, ordinary people would not be able to resist your prohibition. This is because, in your domain, all the rules of the space are created by you. However, you must not forget! This world is created by God! People cannot break your domain, but God can!"

His voice then turned solemn as if he was very dignified and said, "God gave me strength, so I can break your rules!"

Master Autumn gritted his teeth and said, "I do not believe! What God? Show me the power of God!"

He then slashed a blade of light at Pope Corsica VI. However, when the blade of light reached the front of the Pope, it disintegrated like ice under the sun, melting very quickly.

The few Bishops beside him continued to send their spiritual power into Pope Corsica VI. Pope Corsica VI finally raised the staff in his hands and pointed it to the sky as he chanted...

All the clouds in the sky instantly disappeared. The dazzling sun shone directly onto the earth. A roar could be heard coming from the sky. This roar had an invisible pressure, causing Master Autumn's expression to turn strange, and his body trembled.

Master Autumn's eyes glinted and suddenly the Domain Force light above the square became dazzlingly bright.

"It is no use!" Corsica VI coldly said, "People are just people. They cannot match the power of God. Not even with Domain Force!"

Suddenly, there was a whisper from the sky and a translucent and enormous God appeared in the sky. That God held a huge shining Light-Axe, and then he slashed it down at the palace square.

Honng! There was a huge thunder-like rumble and the entire square vibrated vigorously.

Master Autumn's body flashed. A trace of blood could be seen at his mouth. He pointed his longsword to the sky and shouted. "I don't believe!"

The longsword shot through the sky like a burning arrow and smashed into the translucent apparition of God in the sky. That figure then roared and the flaming sword disappeared. He then swung down the Light-Axe again.

The earth quaked. After that, there was a cracking sound as Master Autumn's Light Domain started to crack. Master Autumn grunted and staggered. He then spat out a mouthful of blood.

He fixed his eyes at Corsica VI in front of him and shouted. "Impossible! You used the 'God's Vanquish' spell! How is this possible! God has not appeared in this world for 'more than a thousand years! Could it be..." His eyes grew wide in surprise. He

then pointed at the Pope and said, "Could it be that God returned to the world? Could it be that God's religion received God's will?"

Corsica VI nodded and solemnly said, "That's right. After God has been forgotten for thousands of years, he has finally opened his arms to embrace his believers! My 'God's Vanquish' spell is a legendary spell that has not been used for thousands of years. It is the ultimate spell, using the power of God!"

Master Autumn loudly shouted "I don't believe! So, what if it is God! This is my Domain Force! Inside my domain, I am the God!"

He had a determined expression. After that, his body rose from the ground. He then transformed himself into a huge lightsaber and forcefully slashed towards the God apparition in the sky.

What does it look like when the sun falls from the sky? If it could be described, that was what happened. A dazzling light flashed across the sky. Those who looked at it would feel their eyes hurt. Their vision would involuntarily turn black, and they would feel compelled to sit down on the ground.

After that, the dazzling brightness seemed to burn the entire sky.

The huge God suddenly roared loudly. First, the Light-Axe in his hand suddenly broke, turning into fragments and drift away. After that, the arm... body... head...

Finally, the rest of his huge body also dispersed like countless meteors.

Master Autumn's body was like a huge fireball as he fell from the sky. He had an extremely proud expression. His eyes were burning like a flame. He was transformed into a sword that radiated a murderous aura.

However, on closer look, Master Autumn's eyes, mouth, nose, and ears had started to bleed. His clothes had also torn into numerous pieces. After that, his body also started to crack into numerous small wounds and blood started to flow out of his

injuries.

After falling to the ground, he shook gently and looked at the Pope. He then said imposingly, "Hmph, didn't you say it was God's power? What about it now?"

Master Autumn walked slowly towards the Pope as he grimaced in pain. With every step, several wounds from his body gapped bigger and covered his body in blood.

Corsica VI sighed as he looked at Master Autumn. He shook his head and said, "Master Autumn, why are you so persistent? How can an ordinary human resist the power of God? You forcefully fought against God, and now your body is already broken. You strenuously try and support yourself, but your body would soon break down totally. You might as well just give up."

Master Autumn had grief in his eyes. He suddenly shouted, "Even if I die, I will take you with me!"

His body suddenly swelled up and bloody fog formed around him. His body then violently exploded into numerous fragments. A small and transparent light figure in the shape of a man— a light body— flew out from his mortal body. The light body was very bright but after leaving the mortal body, it immediately dimmed down.

"Soul!" The Pope's expression changed. "Legend said that those with a powerful domain can release their souls. Looks like it was true!"

The light body shot towards the Pope. Wherever the light went, sparks appeared.

The Pope's eyes flashed as he shouted, "Master Autumn, do you still do not want to give up?"

Corsica VI then stretched out his palm. A black light appeared and shot towards the soul like a black lightning.

The light body and the black lightning clashed. The light body

then shook and fell to the ground. At the chest of the body was a black spear.

The face of the light body faintly looked like Master Autumn. However, the light grew dimmer. On the other hand, the black spear emitted a black energy as if it voraciously consumed the light body.

Master Autumn finally looked at the Pope and whispered, "Dracula Spear... You actually used a demon weapon to deal with me... Can you still consider yourselves servants of Protoss?"

Finally, the light body dissipated and vanished, leaving behind a spear lodged into the ground.

Chapter 164: Playing It Big

Sky immediately rushed out when he felt the Domain Force vibration and no longer paid any attention to his companion in the room. Using the vampire's Blood Escape technique, he flew towards the square.

He saw the apparition of God in the sky bringing down his Light-Axe on the Light-Domain . He then saw Master Autumn transform into a sword and shoot towards the sky.

Meanwhile, Rody's men had already reached the palace walls outside of the Imperial Palace. Tens of thousands of Central Cavalrymen were in formation around the palace gates, seemingly a wall of swords and sabers, totally blocking the entrance.

Rody was feeling anxious. He could feel the power fluctuation inside the palace. The intense sword aura obviously belonged to Master Autumn.

Have things already turned violent inside the Imperial Palace?

The Central Cavalry soldiers outside the Imperial Palace were shocked. They could all clearly see the God apparition in the sky. The huge Light-Axe was extremely stunning. Some of them had forgotten their duties and immediately knelt on the ground to pray to God.

The holy presence in the palace grew stronger and completely covered Master Autumn's sword aura.

Rody and the Wolf Fang began to rush through as the Central Cavalry soldiers were transfixed with the situation. All of them were terrified as they looked at the sky. It's a miracle ... a miracle!

As Rody and his group of Central Cavalry soldiers rushed through, the surrounding 'Lightning God's Whip' suddenly realized the situation. Some of their officers recovered enough to start to berate the intruders. The Wolf Fang soldiers, however, had

grouped into a black mass charging into their formation.

For a time, everything was a mess. Numerous cavalymen had scattered as they threw away their scimitars and spears. Some of the soldiers even abandoned their horses and ran off. For a while, there was absolute confusion; the troops and their commanding officers were in disarray.

They could only hear a rallying cry from the Wolf Fang soldiers. "The Duke of the Tulip Family had orders to return to the Imperial Capital! Kill all who block the way!"

Thousands of people then shouted in unison, "Kill!"

This thunderous shout and the Tulip Family's banner fluttering in their faces, together, immediately broke the confidence of all those who would still defend their positions. They were so scared that they fell to the sides to get out of the way.

It was a strange scene. Two cavalries collided. One cavalry was vigilant and murderous. The other was panic-stricken and fled everywhere. However, not one of them had even used their swords.

There was no resistance at all except for one unlucky and careless person who ran towards a horse and got trampled. Just like this, Rody and the Wolf Fang broke through the Central Cavalry's defensive line outside the Imperial Palace.

The doors of the Imperial Palace opened and a group of Imperial Guards rushed out. They welcomed Rody's group and led them in while leaving behind a large number of Central Cavalry soldiers. Their officers could only watch the dust settle in a dumbstruck manner.

When Rody entered the Imperial Palace, he saw a dazzling light at the distant square. He then saw that the apparition of God got run through by the light blade. Immediately, they disintegrated with a loud explosion. The light that followed was painfully

blinding. Almost no one could keep their eyes open.

Rody shouted loudly and jumped off the horse. He then ran straight towards the square.

He then saw everything happen. A light flashed from within Master Autumn's body, immediately splitting his body apart and disintegrating into a bloody mist.

Before Rody could react, a light figure shot towards the Pope. The Pope then shot out a black light which was the Dracula Spear.

Finally, Master Autumn's soul was pierced by the Dracula Spear and was mercilessly nailed to the ground. The spear quickly consumed the soul, causing it to vanish...

Rody felt like he was struck by lightning. His body trembled as he shouted, "No!"

He trembled in anger as he felt like one of his most precious treasures was shattered. His eyes turned black, and an uncontrollable force began to fill his body...

"They killed Master Autumn! They killed Master Autumn!" Rody muttered to himself.

"Boy! Stop now!" Suddenly, a fat figure appeared in front of Rody. Sky grabbed Rody's hand and shouted softly, "Don't be impulsive! If you go down there, you will die!"

Sky spoke hurriedly as he transmitted a gentle force to suppress the violent energy in Rody.

"They used the God's Vanquish spell. It is not something you can handle!" Sky spoke ruthlessly. "That guy down there had a strong domain but he also could not resist its might. Not to mention you!"

Rody continued to struggle. "I don't care! They killed Master Autumn! I want to kill them all!"

Sky frowned. "You know that Domain Force guy?" He then shook his head and gripped Rody tightly with his hands. After that, he

surrounded himself and Rody with a thin circle of light and whispered. "Quickly calm down! Don't reveal your dragon aura!" He paused for a moment and then he whispered, "That guy is not dead! His soul was just taken away! If you want to save him, calm down now!"

Rody stopped struggling instantly and looked back at Sky. He asked softly, "Are you telling the truth?"

Sky nodded gloomily and replied, "I did not expect that someone in this world could use God's Vanquish. This is not a spell a human could withstand. It is not just you. Even if I go down there, I will get myself killed! God's Vanquish is a spell to summon God's power. Do you understand? This is the power of a real God. Even those with strong domains are much weaker compared to real Gods."

Rody gritted his teeth and asked, "The power to summon God? Didn't you say that God has not visited the continent for hundreds of years? How is it that they could use God's Vanquish?"

Sky laughed bitterly and retorted. "How would I know? God really did not appear for hundreds of years but how would I know when they would come to the human world? After all, the continent is God's territory. They can visit whenever they want."

Rody saw the dust gradually settle down in the square. Master Autumn was dead, and his domain gradually disappeared. The violent flow of the air also calmed down.

"How do I save Master Autumn?" Rody trembled and asked, "How do I save him?"

Sky frowned and replied, "That thing down there. Wasn't that the legendary Dracula Spear? Its black magic absorbs souls. That Master Autumn's soul was impaled by that spear and was absorbed. It is easy to get him out, but a soul that has left the body would soon disappear. Although a person with strong domain is stronger than normal humans, in the end, they are still humans..."

"I am asking you how to save him!" Rody asked.

Sky shook his head. "First, you get that spear."

Just as soon as he said that the Pope walked towards the middle of the square. He pulled the spear out of the ground and the spear immediately turned into a black light and disappeared into his sleeve.

"Sigh. That fellow from God's religion is really not so simple. To think that he can even control a demon ..." Sky was in deep thoughts.

Rody coldly glared at the Pope and whispered. "First, we kill him. After that, we grab the Dracula Spear!"

Sky turned impatient and shouted, "Shut up! Do you think you can kill him? Didn't you see that God's Vanquish? That strong domain was immediately destroyed. Do you think you are stronger than that guy with the strong domain?"

Before Rody could reply, Sky had pulled him and shouted, "Follow me!"

At that moment, the crowd in the Radiant Hall were all in shock. They all came back out when they saw that the situation at the square had calmed down. Numerous gold-armored warriors had been tossed around by the wind and thrown all over the square. Barond who was escorted by several men had also fallen and was struggling to stand up.

The Pope, Corsica VI, had an enigmatic smile. He raised his staff high and look as if a beam of light shined down on him, enveloping him.

Nicole had turned pale when she saw Master Autumn destroyed by the Church's followers. For a moment, her heart was at a loss. Suddenly, she screamed and knocked away two of the generals by her side. She rushed to the square and looked at the blood on the floor. There were only bloodstains and the remnants of Master

Autumn's broken body. Finally, she started to cry.

The Empress also came out from the hall, escorted by the Imperial Guards. Her face was pale as she looked at the square. The figure that was proudly standing there could no longer be seen. She grieved, then went soft and collapsed.

Nicole cried for a while. She then looked at the Pope hatefully and hissed, "Why did you kill him? Why did you kill Master Autumn?"

Fire emitted from her fingertips. She raised her hand and shot out several fireballs towards the Pope.

The Pope looked at the angry Nicole indifferently and gently raised his hand. The fireballs disappeared. After that, he spoke majestically, "Master Autumn is a descendant of the devil. His presence is the greatest blasphemy to God! I removed him in the name of God! Do you dare to defy God's will?"

He then gently waved his staff causing Nicole to tremble and stagger backward.

Prince Barond slowly stood up and sneered. "Very good! Your Excellency! I finally understood your true intentions! You came here to show your strength. Am I right? First, you suppressed me and then you got rid of Master Autumn! After this, the God's religion would be able to suppress the Royal Family! The God's religion would now forever be great! Am I right?"

Corsica VI laughed coldly and said, "Prince Barond, the God's religion is only protecting the servants of God. I am only here to punish the blasphemous heathen. As for the dispute between you and Her Highness the Empress about the Crown Prince, we have all already seen what happened just now. Have you still not given up?"

All the nobles in the hall had finally come out and looked at the Pope in awe. The shocking scenes earlier had already surprised

them too much.

The Empress was supported by a few people. Her voice trembled. "Your Excellency the Pope,... You..."

Corsica VI shook his head and replied, "Your Highness. Master Autumn is a Devil's descendant. I only killed him to defend God's dignity. We do not intend to oppose the Royal Family. Concerning the matter of the Crown Prince, we maintain our previous stance."

Garoline also came out from the crowd and showed a complicated expression. He hesitated for a moment but still spoke, "Impressive power! Impressive killing intent!"

Garoline then laughed, his laughter full of ridicule, and coldly said to the Pope, "Your Excellency. You have suppressed Prince Barond, and then you killed one of Her Highness' most powerful subordinate. It is really hard to figure out your stand."

He then looked at Barond and said loudly, "Your Highness. Now that it has turned out like this today, we might as well just leave! The Crown Prince matter stops here. Without His Majesty's orders, nobody can elect a Crown Prince. Otherwise, the nobles and loyal ministers will defend the dignity of the Thorn Flower Family!"

He then went to Prince Barond and whispered. "Your Highness. Let us leave quickly for today. We still have the 'Lightning God's Whip' and the Northern Legion. However powerful the Pope is, he cannot deal with thousands of soldiers on his own. Although we have lost face to the Pope today, our opponent has lost a strong master. As long as the issue of the Crown Prince is not resolved, we will still have an opportunity!"

Prince Barond nodded and grunted coldly. He pushed away his subordinates that were supporting him and got ready to leave.

The large gate in front of the square then suddenly opened and large groups of soldiers started to enter. The black-armored Wolf

Fang soldiers were on the left, the Central Cavalry soldiers were on the right and the 'Lightning God's Whip' soldiers were right behind them.

The two sides were incompatible with each other and stood on different sides of the square.

The Duke of the Tulip Family's expression was filled with grief. He glared sharply at the Pope as he strode towards Nicole and held her at her shoulders. When she looked at Rody, she felt her body turn soft and almost fell down. Tears clouded her eyes as she cried, "Autumn... Master Autumn is dead!"

Rody nodded and whispered. "I know. Don't worry. My friend says that there is a way to save him."

The Wolf Fang soldiers rushed to protect Rody from all sides. Rody then turned to look at the Empress at the top of the steps, took a deep breath, and loudly said, "The Duke of the Tulip Family responds to Your Highness' summon and have returned to the Imperial Palace. If anyone dares to plot against you, the Duke of the Tulip Family swears to make him die a cruelest death!"

The Wolf Fang soldiers drew their scimitars and shouted. "Long live the Tulip! Love live Her Highness!"

The Central Cavalry continued to protect Prince Barond. Although their numbers were more than the Wolf Fang, they did not look as powerful or imposing. Some of them even seemed to look fearful.

The people on the square were immediately divided into two factions. The first faction was with Prince Barond, Garoline and the Lightning God's Whip. The other faction was the Wolf Fang who were protecting the Empress, Rody and several nobles and ministers behind them.

Some of these people supported the Empress. However, there were also some that actually supported Prince Barond. As the Wolf

Fangs were standing guard in the middle, their position was awkward. They wanted to go to Prince Barond's side. But seeing the fearless Wolf Fang soldiers and the sudden return of the magnificent Duke, they started to sway and did not take a single step.

Prince Barond gave a vicious expression and shouted, "Duke of the Tulip Family! Do you intend to follow the Empress' rebellious plans? To return to the Imperial Capital without His Majesty's orders would result in death! Now that you are here, do you intend to kill me in the Imperial Palace?"

Commander Barry started to sweat and gritted his teeth. "The 'Lightning God's Whip' is traditionally loyal to the Thorn Flower Family!"

He then gave an order, and the Central Cavalry soldiers then drew their weapons. The two factions glared at each other and a close combat was imminent.

Corsica VI and the Bishops stood in the middle of these two factions and frowned. "Your Highness, Duke, please calm down!" He then loudly said, "His Majesty the Emperor is still alive. Do you want to create a river of blood in the Imperial Palace? Do you want the blood of God's servants to flow in vain?"

Prince Barond felt perturbed. However, Rody had started to speak before he had a chance to say anything.

Rody's voice was devoid of respect as he said to the Pope, "Your Excellency. This is the internal affair of the Royal Family. Didn't the God's religion say that they would not intervene? You just said that you would only defend the dignity of God. This matter is not related to the dignity of God! You said that Master Autumn is a heathen and killed him! Can you call all of us heathens and kill us all?"

He then shouted, "Ask my men! See if they listen to your orders, the Emperor's orders, or my orders!"

The Pope's expression turned ghastly pale and had almost started to tremble. He looked at the Duke with a fierce expression.

Sieg was standing behind Rody when he felt someone pull him. He turned around and saw an old general of the military.

"Sieg. Has the Duke gone mad? Prince Barond controls the Central Cavalry and has two hundred thousand soldiers in the Imperial Capital! How many soldiers does your Wolf Fang have?"

Sieg nodded his head and replied, "So what if they have two hundred thousand soldiers? Against such useless people, each one of my elite soldiers could easily defeat ten!"

Corsica VI laughed coldly and slowly left the square. He no longer tried to interfere.

Rody felt anxious watching him walk away. He immediately pulled Sky to speak to him. Sky who was standing inconspicuously within a large number of Wolf Fang soldiers whispered, "What?"

Rody frowned and said, "That spear is still in his hands!"

Sky shook his head and said, "You cannot grab it now. There will be a way in the future. He is the Pope. He cannot take a demon weapon with him everywhere he goes."

Rody then took a deep breath and whispered, "Alright. Let us deal with Prince Barond first."

The square was now silent as both sides no longer spoke. The soldiers glared at each other. However, many of the Central Cavalrymen were uneasy while the Wolf Fang soldiers did not feel any fear. They had fought against the enemy armored cavalry in the Northwest before. Every single one of them has spilled blood and seen death. Besides that, they were now flying the Tulip Family's banner. As a result, they were waiting for their commander to give them the order. It did not matter whether it was the Prince or the Marquis. They would kill them first and ask questions later.

Nicole had calmed down and whispered into Rody's ear. Rody nodded and stepped forward. He then said, "Prince Barond. You have the title of Prince, but you have secretly mobilized the army to besiege the Imperial Palace! General Barry. You are the Regiment Commander of the Central Cavalry but you have taken over the defenses of the Imperial Capital without the orders of His Majesty the Emperor! These are serious crimes! Quickly tell your subordinates to lay down their weapons and apologize to the Empress!"

Prince Barond laughed wildly and said, "Nonsense! Duke! You were dispatched to the South under His Majesty's orders! To return to the Imperial Capital without his orders would mean the death penalty! I am the Prince of the Empire! A legitimate heir of the Thorn Flower Family! Who dares to say I am guilty? That woman is not qualified to judge me!"

At that moment, large numbers of Central Cavalry soldiers continued rushing into the square. Barond's men grew in numbers while the nobles and the Empress started to turn pale with fear.

The Central Cavalry soldiers had stationed a lot of people outside the Imperial Palace. At this moment, the tense situation here caused these people to rush in. The small numbers of Imperial Guards could not stop them.

People entered the square from all directions. Some were from the Central Cavalry while others were Imperial Guards. All of the soldiers seemed to have a tacit understanding and each lined up together with their own faction.

More people entered the huge square until it was almost fully occupied.

At some point in time, Gordon approached Rody and said softly, "Your Excellency. They have too many people and have surrounded the Imperial Palace. I have ordered the Imperial Guards to concentrate our defense here. We will gather our men to

defend the Empress and push them back."

Rody coldly asked, "Why should we chase them out?" Rody glanced at Gordon and coldly said, "We will eliminate them right here."

Gordon started to panic and whispered. "Your Excellency. They have two hundred thousand men. The Imperial Guards have less than fifty thousand. Along with the Wolf Fang, we will only have about one hundred thousand soldiers. I am afraid..."

Rody shook his head and then looked at Nicole. "What do you think? Are you afraid?"

Although Nicole had turned pale, she still smiled. She had a meaningful gaze as she whispered, "I am not afraid... I will listen to you."

Rody then said in a low voice, "If Prince Barond had not cooperated with vampires, Jojo would not have died. No matter what, I will not let him live!" He then gritted his teeth and drew his sword. He was about to give the order to fight.

Suddenly, rapid footsteps came from the corridor behind the hall, and then several palace servants ran out.

These people turned pale from fright when they ran out and saw the armies gathered at the square. Two of them went soft in their limbs and almost stopped. The nearest servant then threw himself to the ground in a panic and shouted, "Your Highness the Empress. H-H-His His Majesty the Emperor has woken up!"

His voice was not loud, but in the quiet square, it was crystal clear.

Prince Barond trembled, and his face turned pale. He immediately looked at Garoline's face and saw that the old Marquis also had a similar expression.

"Impossible!" He could not help but whispered. "Im-Impossible! How could he have woken up? I..."

Garoline immediately grabbed him and whispered, "Your Highness!"

Prince Barond trembled and had almost fainted.

The Emperor has woken up? The Emperor has woken up!

He had schemed for so long, and now that the Emperor was on his deathbed, he finally had the opportunity to fight with the Crown Prince for the inheritance of the throne.

But now the Emperor did not die and even woke up.

Since the Emperor did not die, the whole issue of 'inheriting' the throne would become a joke.

Garoline also had a deathly pale face. He saw his entire life as an official crumble before him. He could already see the downfall and extermination of the Lionheart Family.

The interesting part was that while this was truly bad news for Barond, it also caused the people from the Empress' faction to almost faint from fright.

The Emperor had woken up.

When the Empress heard this, she almost could not stand still.

She knew that the child in her stomach did not belong to the Emperor. She knew it. The Emperor would also know it.

There would be no problem if the Emperor was unconscious, but the Emperor had woken up.

Nicole's expression also changed. She trembled and almost fell into Rody's arms.

We are doomed!

This was Nicole's first thought.

The Emperor would know that the child in the Empress' stomach did not belong to him. In that case, the Tulip Family would not be able to escape from being accused of plotting together with the

Empress.

Just like Garoline, Nicole could also see the downfall and extermination of the Tulip Family.

Rody sighed and gently held Nicole. He whispered, "Do not panic. No matter what, I will protect you."

The servants were prostrated on the ground and could not see everyone's expression. He trembled as he continued, "His Majesty... His Majesty gave the order for the Empress, Prince Barond, Duke, Marquis and all of you to go to his sleeping quarters."

Everyone had a complicated expression. Some looked joyful while others looked sad. Corsica VI who was standing at the side of the square also had a conscientious expression. He gave a meaningful glance as he furrowed his eyebrows.

Only Sky had a strange expression. He gave a strange smile and whispered. "This guy. He is really playing it big."

Chapter 165: The Skeleton Becomes Emperor

Emperor Abbas XI was sitting with a blank look on his face. However, he was conscious and there seemed to be nothing wrong with him.

The Emperor met with the two factions in a small hall near the bedroom.

The only person not present was the Pope, Corsica VI.

This was because the servant who conveyed His Majesty's words said, "This is the internal affairs of the Royal Family. Thank you for the concern, but it is best if the Pope does not interfere." These words meant: This is a family problem. Stop being a busybody, and go away.

The Pope was still doubtful, but before he left, he was so angry that his face turned white. When Sky saw this and almost burst out laughing.

The Emperor's eyes were calm and he was neither happy nor angry. Everyone stood in front of the Emperor waiting for him, but he first looked at the Empress and said, "Empress. You don't look well. I suggest you go and take a rest first."

The words 'don't look well' made the Empress almost faint from fright.

The Emperor ran his eyes over her body, not slowing down anywhere to dwell on it at all.

Disgust seemed to show in his eyes.

The frightened Empress looked around and realized that the man that had always been protecting her was no longer around. She left with a deathly pale face.

The room was filled with silence. They had originally thought that the Emperor would be furious and would punish either one of

the two factions. However, the Emperor remained calm and seemed to be waiting for everyone to start feeling uneasy before he opened his mouth and spoke in a strange voice, "It's a big mess now. Recall the armies."

The Commander of the Central Cavalry, Barry, trembled in fright and stammered, "I will o-o-obey!"

The Emperor looked at him lightly and said, "Go. Go back to the barracks, and then just do whatever is necessary."

Barry left the emperor's sleeping quarters. A cold wind blew, and he trembled and thought to himself. His Majesty did not kill me? Privately mobilizing the army to commandeer the defenses of the Imperial Capital, and invading the palace is ... however you see it, it is a crime punishable by the death penalty!

"Your Majesty!" Garoline spoke as the corners of his mouth trembled. Just as he wanted to continue speaking, the Emperor shook his head and smiled. "Marquis Garolline. What do you want to say?"

He then slowly spoke in a relaxed manner, "Do you want to tell me that everything that happened today is a misunderstanding? Do you want to tell me that you are afraid of the Empress' schemes and led the army to invade the palace? Do you want to tell me that the Empress planned to usurp my throne after I die? Do you want to say that you only wanted to defend the dignity of the Thorn Flower Family? Do you want to say that all your actions today is from your loyalty to me and the Empire?"

Garoline's expression became more fearful as each word struck home. After the Emperor had finished speaking, Garoline had cold sweat streaming down his head, and he could not say a single word.

Without changing his expression, the Emperor then waved his hand and lazily said, "Alright, alright. Look at all the sweat on your face. Is it that hot in here? This mess here is truly a bit excessive,

but now everything has passed. Everybody, return to your posts."

Everyone was astounded.

Some of them had even thought to themselves. Has the Emperor gone crazy after his illness?

Nicole's eyes grew wide and thought to herself. Could it be that the Emperor doesn't know that the child in the Empress' stomach was his?

The Emperor gently coughed twice. He then glanced at Prince Barond and loudly said, "This incident has passed. Barond. You should also go back... Ah. However, your mansion was already destroyed, and you don't have anywhere to stay in. How about this. There is a Royal Manor outside the city. You can live there." He paused for a moment and then called out, "Gordon!"

Gordon immediately came in from outside the room and knelt down on one knee.

The Emperor laughed and said, "Gordon. Prince Barond will live in the Royal Manor outside the city. Take a group of guards to protect him there. If anything happens to him, I will chop off your head. Understand?"

A glint flashed in Gordon's eyes as he shouted to signify that he understood.

The Emperor yawned and then casually told Prince Barond, "The Imperial Capital was not too peaceful for the last two days. One moment, there were vampires, and another moment, there was turmoil. Barond. When you arrive at the Royal Manor, you must be careful. Do not leave it without reason. If there is anything you need, tell Gordon. He will report to me."

Prince Barond trembled. He knew that this order was meant to keep him quiet.

Though his face turned deathly pale, he also felt like fighting to the death. Then, he remembered that he was just a Prince while his

opponent was the Emperor. Unless he really rebelled – but the Central Cavalry soldiers would not necessarily follow him.

Originally, he could control the Central Cavalry because everybody had thought that the Emperor was dying. Naturally, he was also a strong candidate for the throne. However, since the Emperor did not die, none of them would be brave enough to rebel against him.

He felt gloomy and lost. He no longer had any desires and just nodded his head absentmindedly. He then followed Gordon out of the hall.

The Emperor then sighed. "Sigh. An old man like me... Ah! I only fell sick, but it has caused so much trouble. The Central Cavalry is also outrageous. Duke of the Tulip Family!"

Rody was startled, and then he proudly looked at the Emperor. There was no fear in his eyes. Instead, it showed some anger.

He did not forget that the Emperor had tried to grab his woman!

The Emperor calmly looked at Rody and his eyes seemed to smile. He then said, "[Bo... Ah... Seth](#). You will manage the Central Cavalry for now. That Barry is useless. I think it is better to replace him with someone else."

There was a moment of silence.

The nobles and officials in the hall did not speak. However, their expressions changed. They all had heard the Emperor give the order to transfer the military power. Originally, he had been suppressing the Tulip Family. But now, he was suddenly giving the Tulip Family a heavy responsibility. The Emperor had given him command of the largest army in the Empire!

Rody was startled and puzzled. He raised his eyebrows and was about to speak when he realized the Emperor was winking at him. He was filled with suspicion, but then he heard Sky secretly whisper to him. "Quickly accept!" Rody did not think and

involuntarily said, "Yes!"

While the people from the military all showed a joyous expression, Garoline turned deathly pale and looked blankly at the Emperor.

One of the military generals then said, "Your Majesty. That Regiment Commander of the Central Cavalry, Barry, had mobilized the army to seize control of the Imperial Capital's defenses. He also ordered to close all the gates and besiege the palace. This heavy crime must be punished"

"Ah." The Emperor immediately smiled lightly and said, "That is right. I will let the Duke handle this matter."

Garoline could not help but also say, "Your Majesty. The Duke of the Tulip Family was appointed by Your Majesty as the Southern Special Envoy. However, he secretly took the army and returned to the Imperial Capital. He has also committed a crime."

The Emperor looked at him and lightly said, "Oh really? This matter? He came back under my orders. There is no problem."

Garoline almost fainted as he thought. Did you give the order? Didn't you exile him to the South? Before you fell unconscious, I was the one who gave you all the ideas. How would I not know what orders you gave?

Just as soon as he thought that the Emperor suddenly remembered something and lightly said, "Marquis Garoline. I heard that Milo did a good job in the North. Pass down my orders and tell him to return to the Imperial Capital. It is a hard life in the North. Someone else should go instead."

Garoline trembled. He knew that the Emperor was seizing his family's military power. He then squeezed out a voice from his throat and said, "Yes!"

After that, the Emperor waved his hand as if he was driving away some flies and loudly said, "Alright. Everyone disperse! There has

been too much trouble today! Everyone, return to your stations!" He then looked at Rody lightly and said, "Seth. You stay here. I still have things to talk to you about."

Everyone immediately bowed but then the Emperor became impatient and said, "Go quickly!"

Garoline stared at Rody. In his heart, he knew that he had been defeated. He then gritted his teeth and left as well.

Finally, in that hall, the only people left were the Emperor who continued to sit down, Rody who was glaring at him coldly, and Nicole, who was extremely anxious. Even after everybody had left, she did not move at all. She stood beside Rody and could not help but pull the hem of his clothes. She was still trembling.

From the Emperor's words earlier, it seemed that the Tulip Family was praised while Prince Barond's faction was punished. However, only God knew if it was truly a blessing or a curse.

After all, their own factions were the one that should actually be considered the ones scheming for the throne.

Either way, the child in the Empress' stomach was not the Emperor's, but they have given that child their support. On the other hand, Prince Barond was truly from the Thorn Flower Family.

However, it was also Prince Barond that almost killed the Emperor. As a result, it was a complete mess.

When all the outsiders have left the room, the Emperor suddenly started to walk down the stairs with a strange gait. He was like a baby learning how to walk. Rody and Nicole narrowed their eyes as they watched the Emperor walking awkwardly towards the entrance and personally closing the door. He then carefully listened for any movements outside and finally sighed. After that, he frowned and said, "Hell, this body feels uncomfortable. The previous one was much easier to use."

The Emperor looked at the dumbstruck Rody and Nicole. He frowned and said, "Why is this affectionate couple looking at me like that? I, this old man... Am I really so scary?"

He looked at the frightened pair and said, "Look at the two of you, standing so close to each other and so reluctant to part. Are you trying to tell the world of your relationship? Did you forget that, ostensibly, you are siblings?"

Rody then realized that the Emperor was speaking in a very familiar tone. He suddenly shouted, "You are Andy!"

The Emperor laughed, "You finally realized? You are really stupid. Who else other than this old man would be willing to take care of you?"

After glancing at Nicole, Andy raised his face and said, "Your actions were too out of place and were extremely wrong! If I had not seen you so wholeheartedly helping the Empress, now that things had become irreversible, I would not have bothered posing as the Emperor to help you!"

Rody looked agitated and asked, "You... How did you change into this?"

Andy waved and simply said, "I have a lot of skills. There are even some that you still do not know of!"

Andy paused for a moment before his face turned serious. He said, "Yes. You are doing this wrong! You should not have conspired with the Empress to do this kind of thing!"

Rody frowned and said, "I also feel disgusted and think it is wrong. However, the situation has already deteriorated this far. We did not have a choice."

Andy gave a supercilious look and coldly said, "Hmph. Do you know what you are doing? The common people call it 'adulterous wife seizing the family treasures'! How could you do such a thing? Even if the Empress is pitiful, you were not supposed to help her

with this kind of thing!"

Rody turned red and said, "What 'adulterous wife'? All of this is because of Seth!"

Nicole stared at them and was unable to understand their words. She did not even know who Andy was.

Andy looked at Nicole and laughed. "Miss Nicole seemed to be confused by our words."

Rody sighed and explained Andy's identity to Nicole. When Nicole heard it, she felt both excited and terrified. She never thought that Dandong would have left behind such a... breed.

This guy has lived in my home for several hundred years undetected, but developed a friendship with Rody and even helped him so much!

Andy sighed and slowly said, "We don't believe in God but these kinds of things are still outrageous. Think for yourself, Boy. What if your wife found another lover somewhere else and had a child, and then seizes your property. It would not be good, right? However, you had helped the Empress to do just that. In other words, you are an accomplice. Even if the Emperor is a good-for-nothing person, it is awkward to do things like this."

Nicole hesitated for a moment before she frowned. "All of this was the mess Seth had left behind. We did not have a choice. Besides that, the Empress is just a pitiful woman."

"Bullshit!" Andy coldly looked at Nicole. "Pitiful? Pitiful people are hateful people!"

Andy showed a harsh expression and asked, "What do you mean pitiful? All of this is the result of her own actions! Is this something that you even need me to tell you?"

His eyes became even more stern as he said, "Because she is pitiful, she decided to drag down the entire Empire and everyone in it? Must everyone get caught in this spiraling mess? Do you set

off a coup just for a pitiful woman? Must the blood of countless others be spilled just for her?"

Nicole argued, "What else should I have done? The Emperor was poisoned by Barond. Doesn't that mean we cannot let Barond inherit the throne?"

Andy looked at Nicole and slowly said, "So what? Barond would have been much better than this stupid Emperor. Their fight is their family business. Who are you to judge who is right and who is wrong? Is it really right for the baby in the Empress' stomach to inherit the throne? Is the baby qualified to become Emperor? Who would manage the Empire then?"

Andy then looked at Rody and asked, "Are you going to manage the Empire? Good! Wonderful! I am not going to say whether you have the ability to manage the Empire. However, when you bear this important task, then you would have to remain a Duke for the rest of your life. After ten to twenty years, you would start to have wrinkles on your face as you slowly cry while watching Miss Nicole marry someone else! Why? Are you saying that Miss Nicole would not marry for twenty years as she waits for her 'little brother'?"

Andy had not put forth an extremely good argument, but his last sentence had a major impact on Rody.

Andy sighed and continued, "Even if this was Seth's mess, it was originally not difficult to handle. However, your method is wrong. If you supported Prince Barond, the situation would not turn out like this! The Tulip Family and Prince Barond originally did not have any enmity. Now, you are like fire and water, and this is also forced by the situation. If you had supported Prince Barond from the start, he would inherit the throne! Prince Barond had some skill and also an unyielding temper. He would have been a much better Emperor than Abbas XI. Who cares if he killed Abbas XI? What does it matter to you? Is your relationship with Abbas XI good?"

Rody frowned. "But the child is Seth's. This already involved the Tulip Family. What else could we have done? We had to grit our teeth and help the Empress. We did not have a choice!"

Andy coldly looked at Rody and said, "Oh? Let's not talk about that! Did you help the Empress for that bastard called Seth or did you help her for Master Autumn?"

Rody was stumped. He was silent for a moment and then sighed. "I did it for Master Autumn."

Andy lightly said, "That is correct. Your biggest weakness is that your heart is too soft. That is why you are always playing into someone's hand! Seth had used you. In this situation, Master Autumn could be considered as using you as well!" He sighed and continued, "Why did you think he taught you the sword skills? Why did you think he kept the secret that you are now a dragon? Let me tell you. This is because Master Autumn knew that the Empress has nobody to depend on. The only thing he could do was to rely on the Tulip Family! He and Seth were different. Seth had used plots and schemes to control you. Master Autumn had used your feelings to control you!"

Rody's expression changed and loudly said, "No! Master Autumn would not do such a thing!"

Andy sighed and said, "Perhaps Master Autumn is a good person. In fact, he is a really pitiful person... He became so strong, but he had that kind of ending. However, I have already said it. Pitiful people are hateful at some point in time. There are times that a good person inadvertently does more harm than an evil person!"

Rody shook his head. Master Autumn was an extremely respectable person in his heart. No matter what, he was unable to accept Andy's argument. This could be the difference between Andy and humans. After all, he was just a skeleton. A lot of times what is right or wrong is logical. However, a human's feelings cannot be judged so simply.

After thinking for a while, Rody frowned and asked, "How did you know so much? These things are only known to a few people including me and Nicole. You have not contacted me in the past few days. How did you know so much?"

Andy pointed to Rody's face and laughed. "As long as you wear this mask, there is a connection between us. However, after you converted that dragon, we became unable to speak to each other. I could still see what you see and hear your thoughts. However, at one point, you took off the mask." Andy laughed strangely and continued, "At first, I obtained a body and was ready to go and scare you but you took off the mask. At that time, I was not able to hear your thoughts. I only found out about everything after you put the mask back on to go to the South. Even though I could not ask you anything, I could read your thoughts."

Andy's smile turned even more strange and whispered, "But it seems like, after a few days of not contacting you, there were a lot of new things in your mind... Ah, what was it? 'The skirt is raised, for the dance of the monarch! The sword is ruthless, Myka is without dreams'! Hahaha! Very interesting indeed!"

Rody became embarrassed when he heard these words and immediately covered Andy's mouth.

Andy struggled to break away from Rody's hand and laughed. "What's wrong? If you listen to me, I will stop saying it!"

Nicole was at a loss and did not understand what they were talking about. She was still in shock and her reaction was slow.

Andy gently coughed and said, "We have deceived them for now. Prince Barond is still just a Prince. Now that the Emperor has reappeared, he would not be able to do anything. I am also not afraid of assassination. Now we need to solve the problem that is Marquis Garoline. That old fox is a bit troublesome as he still has military control of the Northern Legion. However, it does not matter as they cannot openly rebel. He is smart and would know

that such actions could only lead to his death. But we must also be careful if he strikes back like a cornered beast. Doesn't matter. I will let him go free for two days. When the Northern Legion comes back, I will make him clean the toilet. Hahaha..."

After that, Andy sighed and said, "Well then. We will just leave things this way. The most important thing you must do right now is to quickly take over the command of the Central Cavalry. The 'Lightning God's Whip' has degraded so much but they still have about twenty thousand soldiers. It is safer to keep them in check too. However, with me as the Emperor, all these matters will work out favorably for us. As a result, you do not need to worry so much. The only thing to worry about is the God's religious followers."

Andy finally showed a dignified expression and said, "Corsica VI is not an easy man to deal with. Just the God's Vanquish spell itself is too scary. Even Master Autumn who had such magnificent power was vanquished. The Church is ambitious too... Even if he encroached on the Imperial powers, I as an Emperor would not be able to do anything about him... Just let it be. God's powers have now made a reappearance. This is a big problem. Sigh... their patron is really strong."

Rody immediately turned cold and silent.

Andy patted his shoulder and said, "We would need to deal with the Pope. I know what's in your heart. We will retrieve the Dracula Spear."

Rody took a deep breath and showed a peaceful smile to Andy. "I know. We must do things step by step. First, we need to stabilize the situation. Just leave our enemies where they are now. They won't run away."

Andy showed a strange expression as he did not expect Rody to calm down so quickly.

Rody then glanced at Andy with warmth in his eyes and whispered, "Andy. Do you know? These days, I always feel like I

am impulsive and rash. I felt at a loss when I am placed in a difficult position. I know that I am not very smart but I have never felt so helpless before. After thinking for a while, I feel like it is because you were not around. If you were by my side, I would be able to keep calm in the face of difficulties. If it was not because you helped me and taught me step by step, I would not be here today. With you at my side, even if you do not speak much, I will feel like there is a friend that I could rely on. I would be composed in any situation."

Andy was silent for a moment and then he smiled. Suddenly, he waved his hand and loudly said, "Alright, everybody, leave! This old man has finally become the Emperor. I want to enjoy being Emperor!"

Rody smiled and pulled Nicole's hand as he walked out.

When Andy was the only one left in the hall, he sighed and whispered, "Fatty. Have you peeped enough?"

Sky laughed and his figure gradually appeared. He confidently said, "Since when did I peep? I was standing here the entire time. You all just couldn't see me."

He then laughed and asked, "Just now you said 'The skirt is raised, for the dance of the monarch! The sword is ruthless, Myka is without dreams!' What does it mean? Why did that boy rush to stop you say more?"

Andy lazily replied, "Hmph. This is not something a several hundred-years-old fellow could understand!"

Andy usually calls Rody with the words 'xiaozi' (little boy). This had always been translated here as 'Boy'. In this case, he said 'xiao...' before correcting himself. So, 'Boy...' would be 'Bo...'.

Andy's way of saying 'wo lao renjia' (我老人家, 'me this old man') to refer to himself. It combines the word 'I' and 'This old man' together. He had used it when he teased Rody and Nicole at being a

couple. This was what Rody noticed as ‘familiar’ before realizing it was Andy.

Chapter 166: Public Opinion in the Imperial Capital

"Rody. Can I ask you something?" Nicole suddenly asked while sharing a private moment with Rody in the room.

Rody gently stroked Nicole's hair as he smelled it. "What is it?" Rody felt relaxed at the moment. He was in the study room of the Duke's mansion. Nobody would enter this place without permission. That was why Rody felt at ease as he held his lover and asked, "What do you wish to ask?"

Nicole's hair was scattered and messy as Rody fiddled with it, causing her face to itch. She whispered, "You are getting bolder..." She looked at the flames in Rody's eyes, and she blushed. She then said, "I have something to ask."

Rody sighed and embraced Nicole. He gave a wry smile and said, "Well, just ask."

Nicole looked a bit dejected and said, "Actually, from the start until now, I still could not figure it out. Everything had happened so suddenly, forcing us to take this path. Rody, do you think that it was right or wrong of us to support the Empress?"

"What's wrong?" Rody laughed.

Nicole sighed and said, "Andy's words today made me think ... Perhaps, we are wrong. Just to protect the Empress alone and support the Empress out of friendship we created this mess? And set off a rebellion? Do we have the right to do that?"

Rody raised his eyebrows and laughed, but he did not reply.

Nicole sighed and continued, "If Andy did not suddenly appear, what happened today would become a huge issue. A river of blood flowing would be inevitable. I am afraid we would reproduce the tragedy when Abbas the Great ascended the throne. When I think of this, I feel very frightened. Even though we have won, what

about the aftermath? The Empress' child is not even born yet. Are we really going to hand over the future of the Empire to a baby? Hmm? Why are you laughing?"

Nicole felt depressed. Suddenly, she noticed Rody was laughing profoundly. Nicole could not help but glare at him fiercely as she bit her lips. "What are you laughing at?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "What you just said is wrong."

"What?"

Rody said resolutely, "What you just said is wrong." He then sighed and slowly let go of Nicole. After that, he said, "If I had to choose between Prince Barond or the baby as the Emperor, I would definitely not choose Prince Barond."

He then looked at Nicole and lightly said, "Nicole, perhaps, I am not someone who thinks a lot. I am also unable to think of complicated things and what would happen in the future. However, I know that I would not choose Prince Barond to become Emperor. The reason is simple. I do not think he is a good person."

He paused for a moment and said, "Maybe I am too selfish and only follow my emotions. Barond colluded with the vampires, and the vampires had killed Jojo. This fact already totally squashed all possibilities of me supporting Barond. I am someone who knows who to love and hate. I don't care whether it is right or wrong! I only know that I would not support someone who cooperates with vampires to kill innocents! Besides that, the vampires did not only kill Jojo. They also killed a lot of my men. Either way, Barond is my enemy! He will never be my friend!"

Nicole started to laugh. "What you said is simple, but it also makes sense."

Rody shook his head and replied, "No, Nicole, it is not simple!" He had a strange look in his eyes and spoke softly:

"When a general is angry, all things wither;

When a king is angry, blood fills the river, and a thousand heads roll;

When you are in command, all beings become worthless.

He suddenly smiled and said, "Nicole, do you know what that means?"

Nicole frowned and replied, "I do not know. These words sound strange. What kind of words are these? What does it mean?"

Rody smiled faintly, "These words came from the Sunflower Treasure, a book left behind by Dandong. The meaning is very simple. When a person stands on top and becomes powerful, in his eyes, all human lives would become trifling and unimportant. A person like that would decide the fate of millions depending on his mood. Nicole, don't you think this is terrible?"

He then laughed bitterly and said, "When I became the Duke and led my army to the Northwest, I took a long time to consider all my orders. That is because I know that if I were to give a wrong order, many people would die! You also know that, right now, I am still just a Duke. But what if I were an Emperor? If I am a good Emperor then everything would be fine. However, if the Emperor is a bastard, the people would then suffer a lot! Abbas XI may not be a good person but he did not do anything outrageous. Although he was muddled, the Empire was only in decline and did not collapse. However, if Barond replaces him, I shudder to think of the results. Barond had cooperated with the vampires. To him, lives were even less valuable than trash, and all sorts of schemes would appear. The vampires are also not good people. If he became Emperor, it might not just become a matter of the Empire declining. The Empire could very well collapse!"

Nicole opened her mouth and said, "You... You have thought so much?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "I also do not like to think so much. However, this incident was right in front of me and I was

forced to think about it. I was forced by you to study. I read a lot of books and learned many things. Often, I would naturally end up thinking. However, the more I think, the more upset I became."

Nicole lowered her head and thought to herself for a moment before she said, "Then, since you think Barond's rule would not work, why did you not agree to cooperate with Seth?"

Rody sternly said, "Hating Barond is one matter. However, for me to cooperate with Seth is an entirely different matter! It appeared like I finally use the way Seth recommended. If Andy had not appeared, everything would really go according to Seth's plan. This is why, at that time, I did not want to agree with Seth!"

Rody then laughed bitterly and said, "I know that there are a lot of times I do stupid or silly things. There are times that situations would become smoother if I had compromised a little. However, I cannot convince myself to compromise. Seth's words were tempting but once I give him my promise, I would become his pawn. I would live under his shadow. Nicole... Did you know? I really hate this face right now. I would not wear this mask again if it were not for you."

Nicole's eyes seemed moist as she whispered, "I know."

Rody gently pulled Nicole's hand and said, "Let me tell you. On that day, if Andy had not appeared, I would have fought to kill Barond! However, I would not have supported the Empress' child to succeed the throne after Barond is dead!"

"What?" Nicole was shocked. "Are you serious? Then, why did you still act according to my instructions? What was your plan, after killing Barond?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "I do not know. I have not thought it through. However, I would most likely find someone else. A baby becoming Emperor could be even more terrifying than Barond becoming Emperor. Unfortunately..." He then whispered. "Unfortunately, the Empress is a cowardly person. If she was

stronger, she could have just become the Emperor. Or perhaps we could have just taken another suitable person from the Thorn Flower Family to succeed the throne. I heard that the Thorn Flower Family has many relatives. Certainly, we would be able to find someone suitable."

Nicole could not help but laugh. "The Empress becoming the Emperor? How did you think of that? Was there ever a woman that became Emperor? Find someone else to become an Emperor? This is even crazier!"

Rody objected and said, "Why not? The rules of this world were set by men. Why can't we just set an additional rule? Are these rules unchangeable? I will change it!"

Nicole was surprised and revealed a strange expression. "You have really changed... But did you not think ... rather than finding someone else to become Emperor, you might... you might as well be the Emperor, yourself!"

Nicole's last sentence shocked both Rody and herself. Why did I say such things? Even if this idea appeared in my head, I should not have said it.

However, the moment Nicole said this, she also trembled in her heart. This idea could not be considered as 'crazy'.

The Duke of the Tulip Family would rise to power again after defeating Prince Barond. At the same time, he would have the respect of the Empire's subjects. Finally, it would not be impossible to become an Emperor.

Rody looked at Nicole, smiled and shook his head. "I don't want to! I don't like it!"

These days, the proudest people in the Imperial Capital were the Wolf Fang soldiers. The Wolf Fang soldiers patrolled the streets while all the original Central Cavalry soldiers had returned to their barracks. None of the Central Cavalry soldiers were allowed to

leave their barracks. It is also said that the Emperor had given the order for the 'Lightning God's Whip' to be placed under the command of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

The news that the Duke of the Tulip Family had returned to the Imperial Capital spread throughout the Imperial Capital. The incident at the court was common knowledge now and could not be covered up. Everybody knew that Prince Barond had planned to usurp the throne. However, he had been defeated by the Wolf Fang soldiers, led by the Duke of the Tulip Family. These Wolf Fangs were the Duke's elite soldiers that had even managed to defeat the Central Cavalry.

Some of the nobles had asked the Emperor whether they should dispatch people to the streets to inspect and prevent others from talking about the coup. Their intention was to suppress public opinions and arrest all those who spoke of the coup in the court, that day.

In the end, the skeleton stared at the nobles and kicked them back down without saying anything.

After that, the Emperor did something that everybody could not understand. The Emperor had personally searched for a group of Empire's distinguished poets and scholars to create something new.

That thing was called 'newspapers'.

Nobody knew what a newspaper was. They had never heard of it before. Everybody believed that the Emperor's brain was damaged from his illness and now, nobody could understand his actions anymore.

The Emperor had dispatched hundreds of soldiers to the streets in plain clothes. Their job was to confidentially report to the Emperor all the recent happenings in the Imperial Capital, major or minor. The Emperor then made these distinguished poets and scholars write it all on a piece of paper and then made several

hundred thousand copies of it. He then distributed them to all the nobles. As for the remaining, he dispatched people to the city gate, inns, shops and other locations to distribute to whoever they come across...

That strange thing, the newspaper, soon aroused the interest of everyone in the Imperial Capital.

There were stories about a certain Baron that got locked out of his house because he cheated on his wife; good foods in restaurants; and the death of an old man whose children fought over the inheritance.

As people were curious, they could not help but inquire about those fun and interesting things when they read about them. As a result, the newspaper became very popular.

Naturally, the newspaper was not something so simple. Although it had records of strange incidents, it also detailed what had happened at the palace on that eventful day at the most prominent spot of the newspapers. Each sentence seemed to accuse Prince Barond of his misconduct and his motives. Although it was not stated explicitly, there were enough hints that said so.

The first day the newspaper was distributed, most people did not care. Some of those who did not know what the newspaper was, immediately threw them away, while some used them as toilet paper.

However, on the second day, the entire Empire started to stir. Those that had read the newspaper talked about that interesting creation. Those who didn't get to read it started looking for them. They looked everywhere – the inns, the rubbish bins, and the toilets – to search for the newspaper. Finally, it had spread to hundreds and thousands of people.

Although they did not know the true purpose of the newspaper, some of its purposes had gradually become apparent.

When the second edition was published, Prince Barond was only mentioned briefly but another person became the focus of the news. That person was the Military Minister, Garoline.

The words were sharp and they sarcastically hinted at the Military Minister's misconduct. Not only was the minister accepting bribes and embezzling money, but he also did not play his role during the incident at the court.

Those opinions completely dominated rumors and speculations of the incident in the court of the Imperial Capital. All the previous strange rumors and gossips had gradually disappeared and the public started to follow the argument in the newspaper.

Andy, who was hiding behind, laughed treacherously. "How is that? Order to stop them from spreading rumors is not needed. This approach is much better than a Royal Command!"

Naturally, the newspaper could not be free forever. The first three editions were free. However, from the fourth edition onwards, they would no longer be distributed free on the streets. There was an announcement that a new edition would be released every three days and two coppers would be needed to buy and read it.

Ever since then, numerous people sighed. "Uhh... There is a charge now... There is no free lunch in this world..."

Even then, the sales of the newspaper were booming. Everybody wanted to know what happened to the children who fought for the inheritance, the fate of the Baron who was caught cheating on his wife and many other stories. The last edition also said that Prince Barond and the Duke of the Tulip family had dueled during that incident. The Prince had used a move called 'Total Annihilation' while the Duke used his golden fighting energy. What was the result of that duel? It was also said that Marquis Garoline was a [manther](#). The populace wondered if that was really true.

It could be said that the newspaper was then the most popular

thing in the Imperial Capital.

Finally, the Emperor gave the order for the poets and scholars to specialize in publishing the newspaper. They would be paid handsomely for their work. The Emperor also gave them hundreds of guards to use at their disposal.

His Majesty the Emperor also personally named the newspaper, 'Andy Express'.

The imagination and creativity of humans were unlimited.

After the unprecedented popularity of the newspaper, the poets and scholars of the nobles who were in dire straits started to earn a lot of money. They walked with their heads held high and, soon, some of the nimble merchants became restless.

Finally, one of them was brave enough to release his own newspaper. That person was smart and released a new edition every day, unlike 'Andy Express' that only released one new edition every three days.

Sales were so good that the crowds almost crashed his shop.

The people then started to say, "Ah, these days, whoever can change fast... he is king!"

When the others saw that His Majesty did not object to the competition when the new newspaper was released, they became interested too. After that, several new newspapers were introduced.

Some whimsical people started to write interesting stories of the Imperial Capital. Stories on the scandals of some young masters of noble families having indecent relationships with young girls, some commoner young men falling in love with young ladies from noble families... such romance stories were well received.

Naturally, there were also those that painstakingly wrote something in their newspaper and the result killed their sales. Those works would then appear next day in the marketplace and

used for wrapping vegetables and meat. Some of the poets were unhappy and walked up to the streets to ask people why they did not like to read their works.

Their answer: "It's boring."

I got the term 'manther' from Urban Dictionary but Microsoft Word told me that this word doesn't exist. A manther is an old man that prefers significantly younger women. As these women are not children, it should not be mistaken as a pedophile.

Chapter 167: The Duke's Responsibilities

When Rody strode into the room, Andy was lying down, lazily, on a soft cushion on the highest balcony of the palace. Andy had a cup of fresh milk in one hand and a newspaper in the other. The sun had just risen as the skeleton Emperor sighed with satisfaction, "This is a happy life..."

He then looked at Rody and asked, "Boy, why are you here to see me so early in the morning? Is something the matter?"

Rody looked straight at Andy and asked, "How long must I continue as the Duke of the Tulip Family?"

Andy did not reply.

Rody then became impatient and continued, "The Lightning God's Whip is under our control, and the opposing forces in the Imperial Capital had been crushed. Garoline did not even dare to leave his house in the past few days. Why do you still need the Duke of the Tulip Family? I do not want to live with someone else's face! The readers are also getting bored!"

Andy slowly put down the things he was holding, got off the cushion and walked back into the room.

"I know you are impatient," Andy said as he sighed. "However, you do need to be patient..." He then smiled and said, "Although the situation has stabilized, it still needs the Duke of the Tulip Family to keep it under control..."

Rody furrowed his eyebrows. Just as soon as he was about to speak, Andy said, "Boy, don't think I don't know what you are thinking about. You want to get rid of this identity, and then you can go and fight the Pope. Am I right? Let me tell you. Now is not the time!"

Andy then sighed, "Do you think I like those rascals from God's religion?" His tone became serious and continued, "God has

dominated this continent for thousands of years. Do you think you can fight them alone? Master Autumn had a strong domain, but in the end, he was still defeated by that God's Vanquish. Do you think you can defeat them?"

Rody's eyes glistened as he said, "No matter what, I will kill Corsica VI!"

"You will kill him? It's more like he will not let you live!" Andy frowned. "Did you forget about that dragon in your body? Even the Silvermoon Clan wants you dead. Do you think the people from the God's religion will let someone who inherited the Mystic Dragon live? Have you forgotten the enmity between the Mystic Dragon and God?"

Andy looked troubled and then said, "They will eventually find out! The more powerful you become, the harder it would be to hide your dragon's aura. At that time, you will not need to look for the Pope. Instead, they will find you! Why did you think they attacked Master Autumn? That was because Master Autumn was Kara's clansman. In their eyes, you are something that is even more foreign than Master Autumn!"

Rody coldly said, "So what? I must get that Dracula Spear and that God's Blood!"

Andy then said to Rody, "Boy, let me tell you. When your enemy is strong and if your strength cannot defeat your opponent, then it is best you do not attack yet! You must be patient. You must wait until you become strong enough to seize victory! This is the right way!"

Rody frowned, "Then, what should I do?"

Andy smiled, "Have you forgotten the fable Wuya told you?"

There was a deep smile on his face, and he slowly said, "Shackles of the millennium have decayed. The Devil's eye shall gaze at the Earth. The blood of the Empire will eventually solidify. It's vicious

curse will taint the radiance of the surface. They will spread the evil throughout the land. They will bring calamity to the world. [God's blood will wash away the church.](#) The thorns of the withered flower will be the end."

Rody's eyes glinted. "Shackles of the millennium has decayed. What are these shackles? Could it be the imprisoned Mystic Dragon? If the Devil's eye that gazed at the Earth was not talking about the Mystic Dragon, then it is talking about Kara. Either way, both of these two are considered Devils to the God's religion. The blood of the Empire would eventually solidify. The Emperor is dead, and Barond's son is also dead. The Empress' child does not have the blood of the Thorn Flower in his veins. This is probably what it meant! The last words about the withering thorn flower also no longer need to be explained. All that is left is God's blood will wash away the church. Is it..."

Andy flashed a strange smile, "'Wash away the church.' Do you still not understand? In other words, the Church would be destroyed in the future!"

"Blood of the Gods..." Rody suddenly said, "What is the blood of the Gods? Is it really the blood of Gods? But when will Gods appear? How do we make him bleed?"

Andy sighed and shook his head. "I don't know. But, you may know. You may know how to do it when the time comes. Don't you think you have a lot of strange questions? How to make God bleed? Probably the Mystic Dragon knows better. Haha."

Rody frowned, "What about the curse and disaster? What do they mean?"

Andy flashed a strange expression. He then laughed and said, "These are things we don't understand, and we should not worry about it. However, I hope that you can calm down! I have said, you must be patient. The longer you endure, the more powerful you will be, so that, in future, you can even slap your enemy in the

face! I have said this many times already. Do you still not understand?"

Rody stayed silent for a while and slowly said, "I can be patient. I can be patient for now. However, I really do not want to continue as the Duke of the Tulip Family."

He raised his head and looked straight at Andy. He then said firmly, "I want to be myself. I want to be Rody!"

Rody then said, "I do not know what your plan is but if you want me to do something, it is better to tell me first." He walked one step closer to Andy and continued, "I do not like the feeling of being controlled. I do not feel at ease for every day that this issue is not resolved!"

Andy shook his head. "Didn't you have an appointment with Darke in ten years? In the Northwest, there is still Reuenthal. At the Southern Mountains, there is ... ah, there is nothing to worry about there. Wuya is dead, and the mountains now belong to the Silvermoon Clan. The way Diane treats you also seems like she is too embarrassed to oppose you. After that, there is the Northern Continent..."

The more Rody heard, the gloomier he became. He gritted his teeth and said, "Reuenthal in the Northwest? If I were to capture the Northwest grasslands, will I gain my freedom?"

Andy suddenly laughed and said, "Reuenthal? Let's take our time to deal with him. He is very useful in my plans. He is a useful stepping stone in creating a hero!"

Andy's laugh started to turn strange as he continued, "Well, soon you will get what you want. Now that Seth is gone, this person no longer needs to exist."

Rody's heart stirred. "No longer needs to exist?"

Andy laughed again in a strange manner and said, "Boy, I promise to let you become yourself. I promise to let you be Rody! However,

have you ever thought that when you are Rody, you can also, at the same time, be the Duke of the Tulip Family? I promise you that I will give you back your true identity. I also assure you that you would be able to live peacefully together with Nicole. However, you must continue to be the Duke of the Tulip Family!"

Andy then bent over and gently whispered something in Rody's ear.

Rody did not laugh, but there was not a trace of calm too. He suddenly looked at Andy in a strange manner and said, "Andy, no matter what you plan to do, I have said before, do not try to control me and do not force me to do things that I don't like!"

Andy coldly asked, "Are you still unwilling, even if it was for Nicole?"

Rody looked at Andy intensely, and suddenly he gave a smile and said, "Fine, Andy! I hope you will not make me regret this!"

After Rody left, Andy's smile gradually disappeared. He sighed to himself and said, "This boy is starting to have his ideas... but... that curse and disaster, it can't be for you. Disaster... Such an interesting thing..."

...

Marquis Garoline was very clear about his current situation.

The news of that incident had already spread throughout the Imperial Capital. By now, everybody knew that the Lionheart Family, which was earlier favored by the Emperor, had fallen out of favor.

In the past, the road in front of his mansion was busy with heavy traffic, but now it rarely had visitors. Those who used to curry favor with him now avoided him.

However, Marquis Garoline was still an old fox regarding politics. He knew that the winner would not be decided until the very end.

After all, he still had the Northern Legion in his hands even though the Emperor had changed his attitude. As long as he had military power, the Emperor would not dare to do anything to him. Besides that, he had put in the effort for many years, and it would not be so easy to just remove his influence in official circles. Whatever the reasons, as long as he endured, he would have another opportunity in the future.

The Tulip Family had been suppressed by the Emperor for so many years, yet they were able to rise again. The Lionheart family could do the same thing!

Naturally, the first thing to do was to hold on to the Lionheart Family's military power.

Milo of the Northern Legion was different from Reuben of the Northwest Legion.

They were both Regiment Commanders, but Reuben was dismissed because he was stupid. He was a rash and strong warrior, but he did not know how to strengthen his influence. Of course, he would topple easily

.

However, Milo was a successor whom Marquis Garoline had painstakingly trained. He could plan and strategize. He had done well in the Northern Legion in the past few years and had the support of the soldiers. He even had the support of the Northern Legion Army Command such that whatever Milo says, nobody would say otherwise.

In this case, it would not be easy for the Emperor to replace him. Marquis Garoline thought and sneered.

Sieg was promoted as the Deputy Commander of the Central Cavalry. However, he was not happy at all.

He looked at the group of soldiers... they were also known as the 'Lightning God's Whip'. That was really a joke!

The commanders were all useless. They could count money better than they could fight. Sieg turned pale when saw their military drills. The Central Cavalry soldiers had not gone through a large-scale exercise for a long time. Sieg himself had only trained with the Wolf Fang. He knew that the military discipline in the other units was ruined, but this was the first time he saw to what extent they were ruined.

Just by giving the order to line up, Sieg could see that, out of a hundred soldiers, more than ten soldiers sprained their legs, and more than ten soldiers had their shoes stepped on.

In a simple cavalry charge, about halfway through it, a few cavalymen crashed into their own group and fell off their horses. Some cavalymen had actually charged correctly but, in the end, they realized that they had dropped their scimitars at some point in time.

Sieg became so angry that his face was contorted. On the other hand, Rody stood silently at the side and did not show his feelings.

"Officers line up!" Rody coldly said. He then looked at the lifeless and pale-faced commanders beside him and coldly repeated, "What are you looking at! I said I want all the officers to line up! Did you not hear me?"

More than a dozen deputy commanders clumsily ran out. They fetched their war horses and weapons as well. Rody got on his horse. He glared at the surprised soldiers and then coldly said, "You are commanding officers of the Central Cavalry! Are the soldiers usually at this level of competency? You all can quit. If you do not want to do the drills, then you can leave the Central Cavalry now! Take off your uniform!"

Nobody said anything.

Rody then took a deep breath and continued, "If any of you want to leave, I will not stop you! However, in three days' time, I will be back. I do not want to see the soldiers drill. I want to see the

officers drill! Whoever cannot perform, will be executed according to the law during wartime! His eyes were cold as he fiercely said, "The 'Lightning God's Whip' will not retain rubbish!"

After that, he left riding his horse and did not bother to look at those people.

Sieg was still worried and said, "Isn't the Duke's action too harsh? Give them time to train properly. With me around, I am sure I will be able to train them until they become qualified Lightning God's Whip."

Rody suddenly stopped his horse and looked at Sieg. He then said, "Sieg, the current Central Cavalry is rotten!" His expression was a bit strange. "It can be said that all of them, from soldiers to commanding officers, are not battle warriors! The soldiers are just here for the Lightning God's Whip's generous pay, while the commanding officers are here to embezzle money! They are just trash! Think for yourself. If they were even a little combat ready, do you think we could enter the Imperial Capital so easily that day?" Rody then spoke in a more dignified manner, "Think for yourself. If it were not us entering the city that day but a group of enemy soldiers like Reuenthal's cavalry, do you think they would be able to withstand the attack? I am afraid that the entire army would collapse in no time!"

Rody then sighed and continued, "I admit that in this world, some people learn from their mistakes and some bad people will turn good. However, only a few of them exist! In my opinion, instead of wasting time trying to get these trash to change, it is better to just replace them!" Rody then lightly said, "Not just the commanding officers, this also applies to those soldiers! They are just not qualified to be the Lightning God's Whip; they cannot even measure up to the common soldiers! Rather than spend time on them, we might as well replace them with soldiers selected from the local garrisons."

Rody ignored Sieg's expression as he continued, "Pass down my

orders. There will be a selection process in three days' time. Those who are like today's will be executed according to the military law! Those who want to leave must take off their uniforms and get out of the barracks!"

"Three days?" Sieg's eyes grew wide. "Three days are not enough for them to train!"

Rody sneered. "I do not want them to train. I do not expect them to train. I am giving them three days to leave! I want to get rid of all those who are here to embezzle money! I do not want to give them any chance! The Lightning God's Whip is a prestigious name. The opportunity is meant for those who are eligible!"

When the orders from the Duke of the Tulip Family were passed down, the barracks was immediately in an uproar.

The soldiers almost mutinied, especially the ones who embezzled money. That meant, they would lose their livelihood in the future. What should they do?

Fortunately, Rody had expected that and had stationed ten thousand fully armed Wolf Fang soldiers outside the barracks. When there was a disturbance, the offender would immediately be caned as corporal punishment.

As a result, under Rody's operation, the Empire experienced a historical event where the largest number of soldiers were dismissed.

The Central Cavalry originally had almost two hundred thousand soldiers. Finally, after the selection process, less than fifty thousand soldiers remained. The rest of them took off their uniform and became common citizens. Their future would depend on fate... They need to rely on themselves for their own livelihood.

The mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family was also almost gate-crashed by the families of those commanding officers. Some of them pleaded for leniency, and some tried to bribe. However,

they were all rejected by Rody. Finally, he placed Randt and his team of soldiers to guard the front of the Duke's mansion.

The influential families, finally, could not bear that anymore. Since the 'soft' method did not work, they had decided to try the 'hard' method. They joined forces to exert pressure on Rody. However, Rody did not even look at them and simply instructed Randt, "Just beat up the rude ones and throw them into the streets."

The next day, a group of nobles, their faces, and noses bleeding and swollen, went to the Emperor to complain that they were bullied. They said that even though he is the Duke of the Tulip Family, he should not be so arrogant. Whatever it was, they were aristocrats, and there were so many families, could he just beat them up?

However, they were completely disappointed by what the Emperor said. "Go and talk to the Duke of the Tulip family about this matter, yourself"

Some also cried and tried to garner the Emperor's sympathy, but the Emperor was too lazy to even look at them. He simply ordered the guards to throw them out of the Imperial Palace.

Thus, the most powerful and elite of the Empire's four armies, as well as the most well known, the Lightning God's Whip, was reorganized. After the reorganization, only fifty thousand soldiers were left (and that included the re-deployment of twenty thousand Wolf Fang soldiers into it).

The reserve troops department was extremely busy as fifteen thousand soldiers were recruited -- it was for the 'Lightning God's Whip'. Even then, these new troops would have to endure His Excellency the Duke's 'Whip' first. Those Barons and Viscounts that were chased out of the Central Cavalry with swollen faces were good examples of what to expect.

Thus, the Central Cavalry was expanding rapidly, and the reserve

soldiers were so busy that they worked till late into the night.

...

Once, Rody was reading in the Duke's mansion in the middle of the night. Nicole sat beside him looking depressed. She could not help but whisper, "Rody, aren't you too hasty in reorganizing the Lightning God's Whip? Some changes should not be too drastic."

Rody put down his book and gave a wry smile, "I know... Even the previous Duke of the Tulip Family did not do such things." He pointed to the book he was reading and laughed. "I am carefully studying the history of how the previous Duke of the Tulip Family led his men to battle."

Nicole sighed and said, "All of a sudden, you have offended so many people..."

Rody shook his head and smiled, "Nicole, you are wrong. The person that offended people is not me, Rody. It is Seth! It is the Duke of the Tulip Family, Seth!"

Nicole froze for a moment and then laughed. "Is there a difference?"

"There is a big difference." Rody sighed. "I am in a hurry! To revert to my real self earlier, this is what I need to do. The sooner I complete these things that the Duke should do, the sooner I can gain my freedom."

He then gently held Nicole's hand and said, "I do not want to be your little brother. Nicole, I do not want to hold your hands only behind closed doors! I want to be Rody! I want to be able to hold your hands and also hug you in public! I want to be able to kiss you whenever I want!"

After saying that, Rody gently held Nicole's waist and kissed her lips.

Nicole looked at Rody's fiery eyes and blushed. She wrapped her arms around Rody's neck and said in a very soft voice, "Rody..."

Tonight, I will be your woman. Alright?"

The first time the prophecy was translated I used 'temple' because I was confused by the prophecy. It should be 'church'.

Chapter 168: Creating a Star

Early in the morning, the Duke of the Tulip Family ordered a carriage to be prepared. He was going to the Imperial Palace to see His Majesty the Emperor.

His Excellency the Duke did not look too good. He looked tired, and his eyes were blood-shot. One of the guards looked with admiration at the young commander of the Empire and thought to himself. His Excellency the Duke worked all night for the Empire.

Rody wore a bright red cloak over his gorgeous leather armor and strode into the Imperial Palace. He met the current Emperor, His Majesty Andy, and the fat Sky, who was donned in the uniform of the Imperial Guards, whispering to each other.

The two several-hundred-year-old men had sneaky expressions and mischievous looks in their eyes.

They glanced at Rody that had just arrived. Andy suddenly stood up and, with an infatuated expression, he slowly fell into Sky's arms. He looked lovingly at Sky and spoke emotionally, "Oh! Rody, I will be your woman tonight!"

Sky put on a serious expression and embraced Andy with an exaggerated posture. He held Andy's waist with one hand. He then looked into Andy's eyes with a painful expression and said, "Oh, Nicole! My dear Nicole! I love you... That is a gospel truth like how the sun must rise every day! But no, my beloved. We cannot do that!"

Andy then showed an expression of grief and resentment as he continued, "Why, Rody? Why are things like this?"

Sky sighed and said, "This is because I love you. Nicole, I love you so much. I don't want to win you this way! I am even more reluctant to use this situation to win you!" After that, Sky showed a firm expression and loudly said, "Our love should be under the sun!"

I want to be with you but not right now! I want to honestly declare to all the people in the world that you are my woman! A great love should not be hidden in darkness. I hope that when I remove this mask, I can truly be with you! Let you honestly and openly be my woman!"

Andy looked like he was about to faint. He displayed a shy and surprised expression. He then stretched out his hands to touch Sky's fat neck.

Rody's face turned black, and the blue veins started to bulge out on his forehead. His first reaction was to pull out his Dragon Fang sword and fiercely slashed at the two old bastards, who were embracing each other.

When they saw the Dragon Fang sword together with the golden fighting energy slashing towards them, the two people, who were in a tight embrace just now, fled faster than rabbits. After all, Sky had acquired 'Domain Force'. The moment he dodged, his body immediately vanished. Within a short while, he was far away. He did not have a sense of brotherhood at all as he pushed Andy to block the sword.

Andy cried out as the Dragon Fang sword with the golden fighting energy slashed down towards his hair but missed. Andy then screamed, "Boy, you are really slashing us!"

Rody did not say anything. He slashed left and right with the Dragon Fang sword in his hand. The Emperor shouted and dodged the attacks hastily, in the sleeping quarters.

"Don't be so angry. Who asked you to wear that mask? Last night, I can't even choose not to eavesdrop. Aiyaa! This slash is really ruthless! Stop! Stop! Stop! Sh*t, you are still slashing at me. Are you venting your anger at us because you are not satisfied with last night? Sky, you damn fatty, come and help me! Help! The Duke of the Tulip Family is trying to murder the Emperor!"

Sky crossed his arms as he floated to the ceiling of the room. He

looked, indifferently, at the Duke of the Tulip Family chasing the Emperor in circles. This 'treacherous' person had also deliberately enchanted the entire palace so that the ruckus in there is not audible outside. After that, he started giving commentary. "Good, this slash is beautiful. Be more ruthless. That's right. You are still not fast enough. Aiya, this slash has strayed!"

Andy ran around as he screamed like a ghost. Unfortunately, even Rody could see that Andy's frightened and panicky expression was mostly fake. Finally, Rody stopped and angrily sheathed his sword. He then stretched out his left hand, opened up his palm and black flames started to appear.

"Sh*t!" Sky was shocked. "Is he really so angry? Is he seriously going to use that drastic trick?"

Andy really started to sweat, and he stepped back. "Alright, boy, I will stop teasing you." When he saw Rody was about to use the Mystic Dragon Purge, he desperately shouted, "I will quickly let you return to your real old self!"

Those last words were extremely effective.

"Really?" Rody calmed down immediately, and the fiery dragon gradually disappeared into his hand.

Andy wiped cold sweat from his forehead. He knew that Rody was really furious. He then quickly spoke of the idea he had. "I just received a message in the morning. The Temple in the Northern Continent has started to act. So, Sky and I discussed and decided that this is a good opportunity."

Rody looked at Sky who was still floating above them and frowned. "Northern Continent? What kind of movements?"

Sky laughed and loudly said, "This old skeleton here said you have a lover in the Northern Continent. This matter is related to that lover of yours."

Sky then saw that Rody looked like he was going to start slashing

people again and he quickly waved. "This is not a joke. Something really happened there. Old skeleton, you quickly explain!"

Andy cleared his throat and slowly said, "There was a miracle at the Northern Continent! It seems that the Temple there had received God's instructions. This instruction has been sent throughout all the kingdoms in the Northern Continent. They are preparing to start a holy war. Their objective is obviously the Radiant Empire."

Rody frowned. "Miracle? Holy war? What does this have to do with Mouse?"

Andy sighed. He then smiled and said, "Of course she is related to this. It is said that the Saint of the Sauron Kingdom in the Northern Continent opposed this holy war. She was recalled to the Temple to receive her punishment. I heard that she was already imprisoned."

"Really?" Rody's expression changed and became complex. When he heard the news about the Black Veil Saint, his heart immediately gave birth to a strange feeling. He could not help but recall the critical fights he and this woman, who was disguised as a man then, had shared while trying to survive in the Northwestern grasslands.

"She... She was imprisoned for opposing the holy war?" Rody's voice trembled and worry was evident in his eyes.

Did she oppose the war... because of herself? Or because of me?

Rody felt a bit dejected. Mouse did not know that he was a fake Duke. She might not have wanted to go to war because she did not want to fight with him on the battlefield. Her faith was her life and yet she had disobeyed the instructions of her Temple because of him.

Andy sighed and said, "You do not need to worry. Nothing will happen to her."

Nothing will happen to her? Definitely not!

A sense of fear rose in Rody's heart. He knew that whether it was on the Radiant Continent or the Roland Continent, the religious groups are ruthless against heretics. Many people have been burned or hanged to death in the past hundreds of years.

Andy went to Rody's side and patted his shoulders. He then whispered, "Don't think such terrifying thoughts. That girl is still alright. After all, she has an extremely high rank in the Temple. Do you think it is easy to cultivate a new saint? They will not kill her so easily."

Rody remembered about Mouse's identity when he heard this and felt relieved. Although he was no longer worried, he still whispered, "Then, what do you mean, when you said just now, that this is a good opportunity?"

Andy laughed and said, "This is certainly a good opportunity! When the holy war begins, the Duke would need to go to the battlefield. Whatever happens, when the war is over, we will declare that you died because of serious injuries. We can then wrap up Seth's life mission."

Rody frowned. "At the end of the war? It is not surprising for a war between two continents to last three to five years long. How long must I wait until the end of the war?"

Andy stared at him and asked, "What else can we do? Right now, they are the ones coming to fight us. We don't have a choice and will need to fight anyway. How can the Radiant Empire go to war without the Duke of the Tulip Family? How can we announce the Duke's death now? You would know what the consequences are if we were to announce the Duke's death before the war! Without the Duke of the Tulip Family, we won't even be able to fight against the Great Moon Kingdom in the Northwest! Much less, the combined force of dozens of kingdoms from the North and their religious armies! Besides that, for the flag bearer of the Radiant

Empire, the great Duke of the Tulip Family, to die in a war would be the perfect curtain call. How could the legendary Duke of the Tulip Family die from a carriage accident or from choking on his food?

Rody thought for a moment and then frowned. "The Northern Continent has never dared to confront the Empire before this. Why did they suddenly wage war?"

Andy's eyes showed a dignified expression as he said, "I do not know. However, according to the report I received, the Temple has received instructions from their Gods. Miracles had also appeared there. The situation is not clear, but war is coming. Either way, whether we are willing or not, we will need to start preparing for war."

Sky shook his head and his eyes flashed a strange look. "However, this does not concern us alone. Since this is a religious war, the people from God's religion must help. Even Corsica VI cannot object to this. Take advantage of this opportunity to make good use of the power of the God's religion. See how much power they are hiding. Moreover, based on what they used that day, 'God's Vanquish', we are unlikely to lose."

Rody shook his head and thought deeply. "Not necessarily! Didn't the Temple of the Northern Continent say they have received God's instructions? Didn't they also say that miracles had happened? There is something strange about this. Although the God's religion from both continents is not compatible, they both believe in Gods. Corsica VI could use 'God's Vanquish', and this obviously meant that he already had God's help. So why did God also go and help the Temple in the North?"

Sky coldly smiled, "How are we to know? This is something that only those guys, in heaven, know!"

Andy nodded and replied, "That's right. Boy, this matter is indeed too abrupt. However, we cannot avoid this. If they want to

fight, we can only respond accordingly. It doesn't matter whether you are willing or not, at least, you must continue to act as the Duke, now. Not only must we fight this war, but we must also think of a way to win! After winning the war, the threat to the Empire would be greatly reduced. By then, Seth's identity can smoothly end. However, if you lose, then we, together with the Empire, are doomed."

Andy paused for a while and then he started to laugh again. "This time, the God's religion would send out their Flame Knights Regiment. We will make use of them and let both of the God's religious factions fight each other. You must remember to make an appearance during the appropriate time. However, you must also not flaunt your superiority when it is time to act dumb. There is also the Northern Legion... For the time being, we should leave Milo alone. War is coming soon. Even though this fellow is in cahoots with Marquis Garoline, he would not join the Roland Continent out of dignity to his family. Besides that, he is also quite capable. He has the support of everyone in the Northern Legion. Right now, there is no time to replace him and reorganize the Northern Legion.

After that, Andy summoned all the ministers of the Empire and announced that the Northern Continent had declared war. He then ordered everyone to prepare for war.

One hundred thousand of the Southern Legion soldiers, including General Camus, were deployed to the North to guard the Imperial Capital. The Duke of the Tulip Family and the fifty thousand Lightning God's Whip went to the North and converged with the Northern Legion. The four provinces in the North and the Northwest province immediately called up reserve soldiers. The Northwest Legion also stepped up their defenses. After all, the Great Moon Kingdom might collude with the Northern Continent. If Reuenthal did not get involved this time, then he would not be Reuenthal.

The Pope of the Radiant Empire, His Majesty Pope Corsica VI also immediately issued an order. The Flame Knights of the God's religion of the Empire were thus rapidly mobilized to the North.

The Flame Knights have not fought for hundreds of years. For religious reasons, these knights were covered by mysterious veils. It was rumored that they were extremely powerful. But some of the generals in Central Command of the Empire felt otherwise; they believed that the Flame Knights, who had not fought for hundreds of years, would not be very strong.

The clouds of war gradually covered the Radiant Continent, especially the Imperial Capital. There was a heavy pre-war atmosphere. The barracks of the Lightning God's Whip was extremely busy and the army was a hive of activity. All kinds of military supplies were being transported. Weapons and horses were supplied to the recently selected reserve soldiers. Of course, Rody had no intention of letting these reserve soldiers go straight to the battlefield to get themselves killed. The reserve soldiers had only just started. Those newbies, who had just joined the Lightning God's Whip, would first need to undergo strict training before they can go to war...

According to Rody's estimation, the war between the two continents would not end in a short time. It would not be surprising if it lasts for three to five years. These recruits were unable to go to the battlefield at the beginning of the war. They have to be trained before they could be used to replenish the troops.

The Central Cavalry currently only had fifty thousand soldiers. However, those fifty thousand soldiers were selected from those who qualified. As a result, the combat effectiveness of the Central Cavalry was much higher than the previous bloated and disorganized Lightning God's Whip.

General Sieg did a simple review after reorganizing the army and was finally satisfied. "This now looks more like the Lightning

God's Whip."

Of course, the Wolf Fang, reborn as the Lightning God's Whip, is now the most elite unit. They were also the cavalry that was directly under the command of Duke of the Tulip Family. The original Wolf Fang, who were overshadowed by the old Lightning God's Whip, now had a completely different status. The pride and excitement on the soldiers' faces were genuine. After all, they were the ones, among the Lightning God's Whip, who had actually experienced the Northwest war and had gone through thick and thin with His Excellency the Duke.

This time, the situation before the war was different. The coming war did not cause panic in the Imperial Capital.

Before this, wars caused panic and anxiety but right now, there was excitement instead. The entire Imperial Capital was filled with excitement and even the common civilians were enthusiastic about the war.

That situation was attributed to that thing introduced by His Majesty, the newspapers.

For several consecutive days, the newspapers kept convincing the citizens that there would be victory to stop them from panicking. With His Majesty's guidance, the newspaper views are now mostly propaganda. These newspapers were full of stories and other stuff to promote pre-war excitement.

His Majesty told the poets and scholars who contribute to the newspapers. "What can really arouse the public's faith and emotions? It is not a slogan! It is not an empty declaration! It is a hero!"

"Create a hero, with a great image, to be worshiped by the public. Let the people admire him. Then use that heroic image to inspire the people. "

The most suitable 'hero' for the Empire would undoubtedly be

the young Imperial Commander-in-Chief, the great Duke of the Tulip Family. As a result, there was a period when all the newspapers were full of headlines like:

<The Empire's Glory! The Tulip Family will lead us to Victory!>

<The Youngest and Greatest Soldier of the Empire!>

<"His Excellency led us to Victory against Powerful Grassland Enemy." Said a veteran soldier in the Northwest.>

<"He is my Hero!" said a woman, a confidante of His Excellency the Duke in his younger days.>

<May the Chariot of the Tulip Family crush the Enemies!>

<Under the Banner of the Tulip Family, all the Enemies are Paper Tigers!>

Of course, of all the newspapers, the one founded by His Majesty the Emperor, the 'Andy Express' had a column with the highest popularity.

<From a Perfect Lover to an Invincible Commander! He is perfect for both men and women!>

The article described in detail some of the secret moments of the Duke of the Tulip Family. That included how the Duke, during his younger days, climbed over the wall to meet his beautiful lover; and the number female confidantes he had. That was not all. Even more exasperating was that it revealed a love poem, which the Duke had composed for a confidante: The skirt is raised, for the dance of the monarch! The sword is ruthless; the beautiful woman is without illusion!

The voluminous writings created a vivid image of a proud and gentle yet amorous Commander-in-Chief.

Especially, also that the Duke was also young, handsome, had a dazzling background, has heroic deeds and was still a bachelor. The fact that he was not only an invincible commander but also a

great poet had made all the women in the Imperial Capital go crazy. The bravado of a hero and the tender touch of a lover fused together in an idol!

Every time Rody went out, he was accompanied by screaming girls. A non-stop flow of love letters was received at the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family. Every day, the amount of flowers and gifts sent to the Duke's mansion, caused the guards who were responsible for transporting them, feel extremely tired. There were even thousands of girls, who formed the '[Tulip Red Powder Guards](#)' and vowed to support their idol. Occasionally, there were some drunk playboy nobles who, out of jealousy, spoke maliciously of the Duke. Before anybody else could do anything, the playboy would be strangled by a group of the 'Tulip Red Powder Guards'.

An even more frightening thing was, on one occasion when Rody went out, he was almost crushed by a crowd of enthusiastic fans. He and a dozen of his bodyguards were surrounded by thousands of excited young girls in the streets. The dozen strong bodyguards were not able to stop the thousands of enthusiastic and emotional young girls. In the chaos, the Duke's coat was torn off. If Sieg had not heard the news and came immediately with the Wolf Fang to rescue the Duke, His Excellency the Duke would probably have created history. He would probably be the first and only Duke of the Tulip Family that ran around naked, in the Imperial Capital, since the founding of the Empire a few years ago.

Naturally, Nicole did not view such situations kindly.

Rody finally found the root of all these problems... the newspaper. He became furious when he read the article. When he saw the signature of the person who wrote the article, he almost drew his sword and stormed into the palace.

That was because below the article there was a signature: "Written by the newspaper's Star Writer, Andy."

郁金香红粉卫队 actually translates to "Tulip Lady Guards", but

"Tulip Red Powder Guards" would be more colorful.

Chapter 169: Rise of a Great General

Prelude to the war!

The Radiant Empire had finished their preparations for war. One cloudy morning, the Duke of the Tulip Family led fifty thousand fully equipped Lightning God's Whip soldiers together with twenty thousand garrison soldiers, who were escorting supplies, to the North.

The North had already been classified as a war zone. A Northern Command Center had been established. Two veteran generals from the Command Center were sent to the front while the Duke of the Tulip Family was appointed as the Supreme Commander of the war zone. At the northern war zone, even the Northern Legion was subject to the command of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

And so, the war began.

As everybody was waiting for the news to arrive from the North, the North was surprisingly quiet.

Although the coalition forces of the dozen kingdoms on the Northern Continent had prepared to cross the ocean, they had not moved.

While everybody thought that the Duke of the Tulip Family would become the first hero of the war, the real first hero of this war emerged elsewhere.

That hero was not from the North but the Northwest, at Watt Fortress. While everybody was paying attention to the North, in the course of a month, there was a tremendous change in the Northwest. A shining star rose.

The Regiment Commander of the Northwest Region, General Elliot, was a forty-two years old noble. Coming from a traditional military aristocrat family, he was a graduate of the one hundred and sixty-ninth class of the Imperial Academy. He was a Grade 4

swordsman with excellent military school records. He once served as a small commander of a garrison of the Empire. He earned merits for his deeds of exterminating bandits during some chaos and was promoted. For the promotion, because of his family background as well, he was transferred back to the Imperial Army Command Center as Deputy Chief Advisor. After working in the Command Center for several years, he had accumulated enough experience to be transferred to the Central Cavalry as a Deputy Regimental Commander. After the war in the Northwest, he was then transferred to the Northwest as Northwest Army Regimental Commander to manage the military there.

After reading this report, the opinion that Andy had was: Everything is as expected. There is nothing special about it.

In fact, from the information available, there was nothing special about that General Elliot. He was born in an aristocrat family and entered the military at the age of twenty. After twenty-two years service, he held the top commanding position in one of the Regiments. From all points of view, there was nothing outstanding and he also did not have any dazzling military achievement.

The only credit was that he had 'exterminated bandits' when he was young. However, this was often the tactic used by soldiers from large noble families to get promoted. Although a noble could not secure a high post immediately after joining the army, he would usually take a shortcut. He would first work as a low-level officer. He would accumulate some experience and when it was almost time for promotion, he would randomly add some merits, like 'exterminating bandits' in his resume. However, how could the Empire have so many bandits to exterminate?

He would then gradually climb the ranks in the army unnoticed. After twenty -two years of climbing, he finally became a Regiment Commander and was in charge of some military affairs. He persevered through time and eventually held the highest post in the Northwest

Most of the high-level officers climbed the ranks that way.

However, Andy then saw something unusual with the information he obtained. That General Elliot passed the assessment for title succession at twenty-two years old and inherited the title of an Earl.

That was an amazing thing! The fact was, in the Empire, the noble's succession assessments were very strict. It was not easy to pass the assessment at the age of twenty-two. In fact, General Elliot was not the eldest son of the family but his older brother had failed an earlier assessment to inherit the title. After that, Elliot took the assessment and even passed on his first attempt!

Andy checked the records for that year and found out that General Elliot sat for the Grade 3 swordsman examination to qualify for the succession of title! Although to reach a Grade 3 swordsman qualification at 22 years old was not particularly difficult, it was very rare amongst the spoilt nobles. To be awarded the title, most of these nobles deliberately sat for a Grade below their actual capabilities to maximize their chances of passing. For example, during the time when Rody participated in the assessment, there was only a single grade assessed, Grade 1 swordsman. No registration for other grades was received. During General Elliot's time only a few, out of about two hundred nobles, signed up for the Grade 3 swordsman assessment.

Elliot did not conceal his strength and took a Grade 3 succession assessment. Was he not afraid that the assessment for Grade 3 swordsman would be harder? If he was not afraid, then it could only mean that he was very confident of his strength.

There was a reason why Andy earnestly studied information about Elliot.

A month ago, Reuenthal had launched a surprise attack on Trier Fortress. (Trier Fortress was captured by Reuenthal previously but had been redeemed with five hundred thousand gold coins during

the postwar negotiations.) However, General Elliot ambushed Reuenthal's vanguard troops and defeated the enemy in one swoop. About ten thousand of the Great Moon Kingdom's men were killed.

After that, Reuenthal's main force arrived and fought directly against the Northwest Legion. The Northwest Legion was no match for the armored cavalry of the grasslands and they retreated. However, before Trier Fortress was besieged by the army of the Great Moon Kingdom, Elliot gave up Trier Fortress and charged out of its gates.

That was undoubtedly a surprising move as the Northwest only had two remaining defensive military fortresses: the Trier Fortress and the Watt Fortress. These two were strategic military points. As long as he controlled these military strongholds, dividing the troops into two groups to guard the mutual corners and help each other to defend, then he would be able to protect the Northwest region.

However, his following action surprised Andy.

Before Reuenthal's two hundred thousand soldiers could gain a proper foothold at Trier Fortress, Elliot had immediately counterattacked.

The Northwest Legion had immediately surrounded Trier Fortress. This action was a very clever trap.

Before withdrawing from Trier Fortress, Elliot had poisoned the wells in the city. After that, following the terrain of the city gate of the Trier Fortress, he laid numerous cheval-de-frise outside the gate. The strong and sharp cheval-de-frise initially gave Reuenthal a headache when he attacked Trier Fortress. He was worried about suffering a big loss during the siege. But when Elliot suddenly abandoned Trier Fortress, Reuenthal was able to capture it without losing a single soldier.

However, before Reuenthal had time to remove the cheval-de-

frise, the Northwest Legion launched their counterattack.

Trier Fortress was surrounded and Reuenthal faced a difficult situation.

The cheval-de-frise that were packed close to each other outside the city gate prevented Reuenthal's cavalry from rushing out of the city and breaking out of encirclement. Although the infantries of the Northwest Legion were also similarly affected, for Reuenthal's grassland cavalry which depends on a large-scale charge as a strategy, that was a death trap. Every move he made would be lethal for his troops in this death trap.

Elliot was like a madman. He disregarded potential losses and dispatched heavily armored infantries to block the gates. He was simply using those wearing heavy armor as human shields. As there were tens of thousands of human shields and many cheval-de-frise, Reuenthal's cavalry could not rush out and create an advantage. Elliot had already found the grassland army's Achilles' heels. That was, Reuenthal had no proper infantry. They did not have any good infantry at all. The grassland had strong cavalymen but the moment they dismounted from their horses, they seemed like they did not know how to fight at all. When faced with the Radiant Empire's well-trained infantry and tight infantry array, Reuenthal's grassland cavalry, without their horses, were at a dead end.

The bloody battles continued for several days. The Northwest Legion lost nearly twenty thousand excellent infantry soldiers, while Reuenthal's cavalry had also lost a lot of men in the death trap.

Fortunately, Elliot did not have enough military strength and therefore only resorted to lay siege to the fortress. He placed all of his men at the gate to block the enemy from escaping. The Northwest Legion had expanded and the number of soldiers had reached two hundred thousand, like that of the previous Northwest war. However, Elliot had to leave behind fifty thousand

soldiers to guard the Watt Fortress. That meant that he only had one hundred and fifty thousand men with him for the siege.

However, that subtle trap allowed the Northwest Legion of one hundred and fifty thousand men to trap Reuenthal's two hundred thousand cavalrymen inside the Trier Fortress.

All the water in the city was poisoned and as a result, Reuenthal's army did not have any supply of water. Although they had enough food, they did not have water.

The first day they unknowingly drank the poisoned water. Thousands of soldiers died and tens of thousands were sick. As the days passed, due to the lack of water, even more of Reuenthal's soldiers were incapacitated.

Finally, after being besieged for five days, Reuenthal desperately ordered the soldiers to break out of the encirclement at all costs.

Elliot knew that his lack of soldiers would not be able to stop Reuenthal. He wisely decided not to face the opponent head-on. He ordered his soldiers to open the blockade and let the enemy break out of encirclement. After that, he led his troops to chase the enemy for over a hundred miles and killed as many as he could.

Reuenthal's soldiers had already been weakened from the water shortage. As a result, they suffered heavy casualties as they retreated to Redwood in defeat.

In that battle, the Northwest Legion lost nearly thirty thousand soldiers. More than twenty thousand of these people perished as human shields during the siege. On the other hand, Reuenthal's Great Moon Kingdom had sent out two hundred thousand troops but only less than one hundred thousand returned. Thirty thousand soldiers were lost in the initial days of fighting and another thirty thousand soldiers were lost while they were being chased by the Northwest Legion. Over ten thousand soldiers were also captured by the Northwest Legion. Besides that, over thirty thousand soldiers who were still in the fortress could no longer

fight or were sick from the poisoned water. These people were abandoned by Reuenthal.

After evaluating the result of the battle, Elliot made another shocking decision.

The thirty thousand sick and injured soldiers in the city along with the ten thousand captured soldiers were all ordered to be executed by Elliot. This ruthless decision caused an uproar in the Imperial Capital.

This action was immediately criticized by the scholars of the Empire. They claimed that the Empire was a strong and civilized country. Massacring prisoners and civilians were shameless and barbaric acts of the grassland. How could the brave warriors of the great Empire do such a thing? They claimed that massacring defenseless prisoners of war had tarnished the name of the great Empire.

Elliot was hard-headed. He ignored all the criticisms and attacks and simply sent the Emperor a report.

The report was very simple. There was a paragraph which Andy appreciated a lot.

"The Great Moon Kingdom is vast but sparsely populated, with less than a million people. Excluding the old, women, and children, the grasslands had several hundred thousand people in their prime. For each death, there would be one less! The more they lose such young and strong men, the weaker their national strength becomes. I did this to help the Empire remove the hundred years of threat in the Northwest!"

Andy immediately ordered the newspaper to write about Elliot's victory in the Northwest and avoid writing about the slaughter of prisoners. They were asked to praise Elliot and his Northwest Legion for the victory. He relied on the power of the newspaper to control public opinion to think favorably of Elliot while preventing more malicious remarks of him. Andy then sent the Northwest

Legion a commendation reward in the name of the Emperor.

Andy sighed when he looked at the Northwest war report and said, "Rody, this Elliot has something that you currently lack the most. Ruthlessness!"

At that moment, Rody was feeling depressed in the North.

Nearly four hundred thousand soldiers had gathered in the North. The Northern Legion's two hundred thousand soldiers were already mobilized. In fact, during the incident at the palace, Milo had already made preparations. Unfortunately, Milo's preparations were totally unnecessary thanks to Andy's sudden appearance.

However, the sudden war that broke out did not put his efforts to waste.

One hundred thousand of the Flame Knights from the God's religion also arrived in the North. The Regiment Commander of the Flame Knights was a cool and detached middle-aged man, named Guddu. [He had the appearance of a devout monk.](#) He wore the leather armor of the Flame Knights under his gray robe. That made him look like a Bishop Elder of the God's religion. The only thing he was missing was a staff.

If it were just Guddu, it would have been acceptable, as he was indifferent and did not speak much. However, the other person dispatched there, a Bishop Elder, made Rody sick.

Because of that incident in the court, the relationship between the Church and the Duke of the Tulip Family was strained. As a result, the Bishop Elder was not too friendly with the young commander.

However, the Bishop Elder was a religious fanatic. The battles had not started. Every day, he would take a bunch of missionaries and tour the barracks to spread their religious belief. To publicize their religious belief, they praised God's greatness and how the

religion acted as God's spokesman in the world. He even strongly urged Rody to order the army to devote some of their daily training time to pray to God. That made Rody very uncomfortable, but the Bishop said, "This is a crusade. A crusade to fight the heathens. That was why they must spread the theology of God before the war. That could enhance the soldier's faith and devotion in God. Through devout faith for God, the soldier's morale and combat effectiveness will improve..."

If it were not because of his current identity and the pre-war unity, Rody would have already kicked him out of the barracks.

We cannot improve morale of the soldiers with empty theological arguments or by praising God. If it were not because of the hatred between the continents, Rody would think that this guy was sent by the Church to cause disturbance in the military.

The monk here refers to Roman/ Catholic Church styles. They are a type of monks with short(?) hair but still have enough not to be considered totally bald (having hair that is 1mm or shorter).

Chapter 170: Sorrows of the Empire

In fact, Rody very much hoped that he could just straightaway lead his troops to attack the Northern Roland Continent. It was not good for tens and thousands of the soldiers to guard the North and just wait for the enemy to attack.

The northern provinces of the Empire were not fertile. The land there was barren and was not suitable for producing food. For centuries, whenever there was a war between the two continents, that location would be the front line. Even if it was not the battlefield frontline, it was still the forward position.

For centuries, these provinces of the Empire were commonly known to the Empire as the war zone.

The Radiant Empire had control of an entire continent. No matter whichever aspect, it was much stronger than any kingdom on the Northern Roland continent. Only a coalition of all the kingdoms on the Roland Continent could compete with the Empire.

For centuries, there were many large and small crusades. Some were conducted during the reign of Abbas the Great. After forming the government for the entire Radiant Continent, the greatest Emperor in the history of the Empire decided to conquer the Northern Continent, the only land not yet conquered.

Unfortunately, Abbas the Great could not unify the two continents. The Lightning God's Whip could not even stop the valiant armored cavalry of the grasslands. Hence, he could only lament and sigh at the vast ocean.

The Empire's army was large and strong. The four main armies combined had a full million soldiers. Including all the garrisons from the provinces, the number of soldiers in the Empire reached nearly two million. This number did not include the reserve troops.

The Empire had well-equipped infantry and powerful warriors. There were also brave war warriors under the banner of the Tulip Family and the Radiant Continent's most powerful cavalry, the Lightning God's Whip.

However, the Empire had one major weakness — the navy.

Dandong lamented when he was still alive. He said that if the Imperial Navy had half ... no, even only one-third of the strength of the Lightning God's Whip, then it would not be a dream to conquer the Roland Continent.

Besides its commanders and sailors, the most important advantage of a navy derives from its warships. Unfortunately, the Imperial Navy could only be considered third-rate when compared to its infantry and cavalry. In fact, it was not even third-rate.

Historically, the Radiant Empire had failed in their attacks on the Roland Continent because of its weak navy. These failures happened three times during Abbas the Great's reign.

During the first attempt, the Empire created a big and powerful navy. Naturally, it was considered 'powerful' in the opinion of Abbas the Great. Unfortunately, the cruel reality made the Emperor furious.

The Imperial Navy was almost annihilated in the Strait of Thunder. Very shamefully, the commanding general of the Northern Navy, whom Abbas the Great had placed high hopes on, was captured by the people of Roland.

The second time was a little bit better. Abbas the Great knew he could not rely on the navy and decided to use his powerful cavalries. During that crusade, the Imperial Navy only played the role of a transporter. As the coastline was long, the opponents could not block everywhere. There would be a suitable place for landing. It was history's largest marine transportation. The people from the Roland Continent sank a few ships. But finally, one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers set foot on the Roland

Continent. The Lightning God's Whip and their horses finally gained a foothold on the Roland Continent!

However, the subsequent situation once again fell into a predicament.

The one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers who landed on the Roland Continent were almost annihilated and only ten thousand soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. The Empire had to pay a huge sum of money to redeem the prisoners.

This time, the Empire lost two hundred thousand elite soldiers. Abbas the Great was undoubtedly very furious. The Strait of Thunder seemed like an impassable natural trench. It steadfastly blocked the Empire cavalry's progress and protected the Roland continent.

Then for the third crusade, the people of the Roland continent made the mistake of letting their earlier victories go to their head.

After the Empire's first two failed crusade, the kingdoms in the Northern Roland continent believed that the Empire in the South was not that powerful and finally decided to attack the South.

Their powerful navy sailed unimpeded through the Strait of Thunder and a large number of troops set foot on the Radiant continent. The armies from the coalition of more than a dozen kingdoms sailed south in two groups. They intended to conquer the Southern continent in one fell swoop.

The ocean belonged to the Roland people but the land was still the forte of the Radiant Empire.

During the first two wars, the Empire had lost many brave soldiers and elite cavalrymen. However, the Empire was still strong and powerful. Most importantly the Empire still had the Duke of the Tulip Family.

It was also during the third crusade when the sage Dandong appeared. Nobody knew where this great man appeared from but

he had helped the Duke of the Tulip Family to defeat the enemy. He created countless strange weapons during the war, had endless wisdom and also a strange mindset.

After landing, the troops from the Roland continent had traveled far inland. In the end, two of their large armies were defeated by the Duke of the Tulip Family such that they were forced to retreat to the sea. But in that war, although the Empire had eventually repelled the enemy, they could not make up for the disgrace of almost being overthrown in their own land.

The only bright spot was the appearance of Dandong.

The people of the Empire were all guessing as to how Abbas the Great would take revenge on the Roland Continent. After all, even though he was able to conquer the entire Radiant Continent, he was being attacked in his own land. It was the shame that an Emperor would tolerate. Everybody was waiting for him to counter attack.

However, Abbas the Great's strength lies in his mind. After reflecting on the matter for three days in the palace, he gave the order to stop fighting against the troops on the Roland Continent.

The three failed crusades had caused the Empire to shed too much blood. The natural barrier had prevented the conquest. Until a solution to resolve that problem was found, continuing the war would undoubtedly only be a waste of the precious lives of the Empire's warriors.

That was why the navy was forever the humiliation of the Empire.

The warships of the Empire's navy were naturally much much weaker compared to the warships of the Roland Continent. The Roland Continent produced a strange ironwood. Ironwood was different from other woods. It was as hard as iron but as light as ordinary wood. It was undoubtedly the best material for shipbuilding. With that special material, the people of the Roland

Continent created the world's most advanced warships and the most powerful sea fortresses.

Regrettably, that ironwood could not be found on the Radiant Continent.

Historically, the Empire had secretly tried to import those woods but failed. That was because the people in the Roland Continent knew the value of the wood and prevented it from being transported to the South. Of course, through a lot of effort, the Empire still managed to obtain some seeds and seedlings of that tree.

Unfortunately, they were disappointed with the results.

Due to the differences in the climate and soil, the transplanted ironwood trees in the Radiant Continent could not survive. The majority of the trees perished within a month. On the rare occasions that they survived, the quality of the wood was much worse than the ironwood in the North. The amount of wood produced was also greatly reduced.

As a result, the Roland Continent's proud navy still maintained their undefeated record and remained the king of the Strait of Thunder.

Of course, the things Rody knew were a little different from the historical records.

According to Dandong's notes, Rody, at the very least, knew that the ironwood trees could be successfully transplanted on the Radiant Continent.

Dandong seemed to have mentioned several methods in his notes. Those methods had strange names like 'greenhouses', 'hydroponics' and 'temperature regulation', etc. Rody could not understand these words.

What surprised Rody, even more, was that Dandong's notes had an earthshaking revelation. Wood is still wood, however hard it is.

What is so great about wooden ships? Give me some time and I would be able to come up with an armored fleet!

Iron?

Ships made of iron?

Rody's heart was full of doubts as he thought to himself. Things made of iron, when dropped into water will immediately sink. Can iron really be used to build ships?

However, Dandong had already created a series of miracles. As a result, Rody had to somewhat believe Dandong's words. If it were invented by Dandong, it might really be possible.

The important fact was that those were all only recorded by Dandong in his notes. He had never mentioned those things to anybody and he also did not suggest anything to Abbas the Great.

In his notes, Dandong also mentioned that the Empire's navy was weak and the problem could not be resolved just by having stronger warships. The people on the Roland Continent had a strong navy from hundreds of years of accumulated experience. The difference in warships was only one of the reasons. Even if the Empire made such new warships, it might not be useful.

In fact, the terrain of the Roland Continent was very gentle. The whole Roland Continent was like a piece of paper with a large hole in the middle. The large hole in the middle occupied one-fifth of the total area of the Roland Continent. That was Baikal Lake. A river, the Baikal River, connected that lake to the Strait of Thunder.

As there was a large lake in the middle of the continent, the people on the Roland Continent had developed their skills in water warfare. As a matter of fact, the dozen kingdoms in the continent have had naval battles against each other for hundreds of years. They had accumulated a lot of experience from the naval battles.

If the two continents were to fight, the navy from the many

kingdoms of the Roland continent would join forces. From the Baikal Lake, they could sail uninterrupted through the long river to get to the Strait of Thunder. However, the Empire didn't even have a navy that was worth looking at.

A powerful army was also not created by training and drills only. They need to go through a real war, through the baptism of fire, to hone a sharp edge.

Dandong had also pointed out, at that time, that the Radiant Empire should not start the fourth crusade.

The first three holy crusades had caused the Empire to lose a lot of their national strength. There were still a lot of internal matters that were not yet resolved. The most important thing was not to conquer the 'Northern lands held by heathens', but to quickly increase the strength of the huge Radiant Empire.

Dandong understood that with Abbas the Great's temperament if he knew how to build proper warships, he would certainly start another war. That was why Dandong remained silent.

Rody stood at the top of one of the towers of the city. He looked at the vast ocean. The waves of the Strait of Thunder roared in anger. Rody then thought about the things written in Dandong's notes.

"At that time, the timing was not right. But now the opponent had decided to attack us instead. Must we only wait for them to attack us?" Rody then whispered to himself. "A ship made of iron... interesting..."

They guarded for another month at the coastal Thunder City before the Radiant Empire finally received a message from the Roland Continent. The messenger came to deliver the declaration of war. The people on the Roland continent uphold what they call the 'Knight's Spirit'. It was strange to the extent that even their declaration of war had an elegant feel to it.

The declaration of war should have been short and direct. Instead was worded with phrases of grandeur and refinement: 'In order to defend the dignity of God', 'In order to spread God's light', 'to bring more people into his sanctuary', 'We declare war against you on our honor as knights', 'On such and such day and month, we will land at the Thunder City shores', 'hoping that your side will submit to God's will and surrender with dignity. Otherwise, we will fight a fair battle according to the Knight's Spirit'.

Rody smiled wryly after reading the declaration of war. [He grabbed a sword from a nearby soldier, and as he threw it at the feet of the messenger,](#) he coldly said, "Go back and tell your commander. This is the reply of the Duke of the Tulip Family!"

Rody then stood on the walls and watched the messenger leave the city, through the wilderness and then to the coast. After that, the messenger got onto a small boat and left. Rody looked up at the sky and smiled calmly.

Sieg stood behind him and asked, "Your Excellency the Duke, are the people from the Roland Continent brainless? Since they are here to invade us, why bother writing a declaration of war and even tell us the time and place they would disembark. Isn't this clear that they are giving us a chance to prepare? The northern coastline is long and our navy is useless. We would not have been able to stop them. They just needed to find a place to safely disembark and then reorganize before fighting us. Won't that be better?"

"Commander Sieg... Oh, wrong. Should be Deputy Regiment Commander Sieg now..." The Regiment Commander of the Northern Legion, a nephew of Marquis Garoline of the Lion Heart Family, Milo, then shook his head and coldly said, "The people from the Roland Continent advocate the 'Knight's Spirit'. They believe that they would gain glory only if they defeat their opponents in a fair and dignified manner. Sneak attacks would only sully their honor as knights. As a warrior, I admire their

spirit. But, as a general, I can only sneer at their rigid methods."

Rody looked at Milo while Milo pretended not to notice that gaze.

In fact, these two days the relationship between the two of them was not that good. They had met once before, in a banquet in the Imperial Capital. At that time, Rody was still an ignorant boy who had just started to act as an imposter of the Duke of the Tulip Family for just a few days. Then, he was badly humiliated by the arrogant Milo. After that, Milo was played out by Jojo.

When Rody thought of Jojo, his heart ached. He then glanced at Milo with a complicated expression.

People's minds were very complex. Rody did not really hate Milo. Milo was only on bad terms with him because of their families' conflicts. Besides that, Rody was not really the Duke of the Tulip Family. Milo had been very infatuated with Jojo but now that beauty is gone. Rody could not help but feel sad. He recalled Jojo's smile and the time she stood together with Milo and him. Even the memory of the infighting among the three of them had become a fond memory.

Is it a fond memory because Jojo was alive then?

When I first arrived in the North, Milo looked at me with a deep pain in his heart. Is that also because of Jojo? When this Regiment Commander of the Northern Legion heard of Jojo's disappearance, he had almost rushed back to the Imperial Capital.

Rody did not love Jojo but he had always felt guilty towards her. Right now, standing in front of him was a man who was deeply in love with Jojo. In any case, Rody did not hate Milo.

Milo finally could not ignore Rody's stare. However, he seemed to have misunderstood Rody's thoughts and coldly said, "Your Excellency the Duke, do you have a different opinion from me?" Rody took a deep breath, shook his head as he tried to get rid of the depression in his heart. He then said, "Your Excellency, Milo, I

think that you are correct. However, I do see things a bit differently."

Rody smiled and slowly said, "The people of the Roland Continent advocates the Knight's Spirit but they are not idiots and neither are they inflexible. They are also cunning too. Their secret cooperation with Reuenthal from the Northwest proved that much. I think they gave us a declaration of war and even told us their target because they could not help it.."

Milo did not say anything. He just looked at Rody coldly.

Rody pretended not to notice his cold gaze and continued, "They would cross the ocean. After they disembark, the most important thing they need to do would be to obtain a foothold. They need to seize a stronghold! After that, they would be able to reorganize their soldiers and coordinate supplies! This would also help them to prevent us from counterattacking! Currently, the military stronghold closest to the coast is here, Thunder City! Because of the Empire's centuries of preparation, there is no place near the coast that would allow them to obtain a foothold. Their army cannot simply come ashore to fight. This is why, no matter what, they must first attack Thunder City. This is their only choice."

Throwing the sword is the reply. It means 'we choose to fight' I am not sure if it exists in real life but I have seen similar customs in video games.

Chapter 171: The First Day

Rody had never seen so many warships

On the day of the decisive battle, when the morning sun had just risen, the ocean was shrouded in a layer of golden ripples. The weather was surprisingly good, and the ocean was calm. Specks of sails appeared faintly on the horizon.

More and more specks emerged. The few specks grew to ten. Ten grew to dozens. Dozens grew to a whole ocean of sails on the horizon...

The groups of black warships headed for the coast, and finally stopped at a distance about one kilometer off it.

The people of the Roland Continent had excellent ship building skills. Their large warships had several floors. They were also extremely strong. Each ship was like a small fortress on the ocean.

After some time, the sailors at the observation ledges on their huge masts started to wave their flags, signaling a maneuver. After that, the warships broke their formation.

Sieg stood on the walls and frowned. "The Roland continent's warships are really advanced. We cannot create a warship that can carry so many people. I think a warship this big can probably carry a few hundred people."

Milo heard this even though he was standing quite some distance from Rody and Sieg. He had a better understanding of the Roland Continent as he had spent more time in the North. Milo shook his head and said, "This is considered small. It looks like the opponent does not intend to send everyone out all at once. To the people of the Roland Continent, these warships are merely second or third-class ships. Each of these ships has four flame magicians and about a dozen cannons. The hulls of these ships are spacious. It can be used to transport goods or people. If it only transports soldiers,

each ship can carry three to five hundred soldiers. If it were a first-class warship, it would not be strange for it to have more than a thousand people on board."

"More than a thousand people?" Sieg took in a deep breath. "A ship that can carry more than a thousand people. It must be really big."

Rody silently looked at his enemy fleets on the surface of the ocean. His eyes glinted.

Sieg suddenly said, "I can see several hundred ships approaching. These hundreds of ships can only carry about twenty or thirty thousand soldiers. Why so little?"

Milo smiled coldly and said, "It is not several hundred. There are altogether more than two hundred ships. I can recognize their banner. The ones that raised the White Cross banners are the main ships. In the Roland Continent, each fleet is about ten ships. If you count the number of white crosses they have, then you will be able to tell the number of ships they have. Look at the ship with the black cross. This is the Roland Continent's real warship. This one must be their vanguard's command ship."

Rody lightly said, "More than two hundred warships cannot all be loaded with people. There must be horses and supplies as well. I think this group should have at most twenty thousand soldiers."

As they talked, their opponent's warships had started to set down numerous small boats. Those boats were filled with about twenty to thirty soldiers per boat. Those soldiers then paddled the boats with great effort. Within a short while, the ocean was packed with small boats. Those small boats were scattered all over the golden ocean as they moved towards the coast.

Sieg's eyes flashed and said, "Your Excellency the Duke, let us attack them the moment they disembark. We can take advantage of the fact that they are not organized. Let me lead the Wolf Fang and charge at them. Since the opponent has only twenty thousand

soldiers, with just two to three charges by our cavalry, they would be completely defeated!"

They saw the small boats gradually getting closer to the coast. Some of the faster ones, in front, had already reached the coast. Those soldiers put down their paddles, picked up their swords and jumped off their boats. They waded in waist deep water, heading for the beach.

"Your Excellency the Duke, now is the time!" Sieg said excitedly. "They need some time to organize after they embark ashore. If we advance now, we can easily defeat them!"

Rody took a deep breath. Without looking at Sieg, he lightly said, "No!" He paused and then added. "Without my orders, you are not allowed to attack!"

Having said that, Rody looked at the Roland army who had embarked on the shore. He was calm. He then turned around, got down from the city wall and left.

Sieg frowned but Milo, who was beside him, sneered and said, "Deputy Regiment Commander Sieg, do you still not understand what is His Excellency the Duke's intention?"

Sieg gave Milo a glance and asked, "Do you understand?"

Milo smiled as his thin face gave a profound expression and said, "Obviously. These guys are just the Roland Army's vanguards. Their task is to get on the shore and test our reaction. It is not difficult to send out the cavalry and kill these twenty thousand soldiers. They are sent here just to test the waters. If you were to fight them, they would return to the ocean. Do you think our warships can compete with theirs? If they were to land at a different place, would your cavalry still be able to keep them on the shore? His Excellency the Duke's intention is obvious. He wants more of them to disembark! The more, the better! The ocean is the territory of the Roland people but the land is our territory!"

Thus, thousands of boats reached the coast and twenty thousand soldiers finally stepped foot on the Radiant Continent.

Those twenty thousand soldiers were infantries. The moment they disembarked, they immediately started to find a place and build fortifications. They had some wood and equipment with them when they disembarked. They began to put up tents and fortifications. The people on the walls watched them busy working from morning until night. From a distance, it was visible that tents and fortifications were closely built on the shores, outside Thunder City. The numerous tents, which looked like ants, covered the entire coast and was enough for an army of more than one hundred thousand.

They were extremely busy but not vigilant at all. They did not even spare a few thousand men to keep guard. The twenty thousand soldiers were working intensely and were not at all worried whether their enemies would rush out of the city to kill them.

In the evening, Rody once again went up on the city walls. He looked outside the city and frowned. He suddenly whispered, "Milo..."

Milo was startled. He did not expect that the Duke of the Tulip Family, who was never on good terms with him, would take the initiative to speak to him.

Rody slowly said, "Have you noticed? Something seems strange."

Milo's eyes also revealed his anxiety and he replied, "Seth, you realized that as well?" Milo coldly said, "The enemy commander is smart too. He already knew our intentions and that we will not attack his vanguards. He knew that we want to fight on land and will let them disembark. This is why these vanguards did not spare any men to watch out for us. They know we will not attack them."

Rody nodded and said, "That's right. We wanted them to disembark and use our land advantage to defeat them. However, it

seems like they also understood this point. The enemy commander is really not a simple person."

Milo raised his eyebrows when he heard Rody said the word 'we'. His expression changed as though he wanted to say something.

Rody looked at him and coldly said, "General Milo, I know you do not like me. You do not like me not just because of family reasons but also because of personal reasons. However, war is about to start. If you are a real man, a general of the Empire and a warrior of the Lionheart Family, you will leave behind whatever grudges we have until after the war."

Milo stayed silent for a moment. He then replied coldly, "Seth, I admit that I hate you! Rest assured! I, Milo, may not be a good person, but I am a man!"

After saying that, Milo gave a glimpse below the city and said, "There is nothing left to see here. Tomorrow, their large army would disembark and occupy that camp. I will go back first to prepare for tomorrow's battle!" He no longer looked at Rody, turned around and left.

When night arrived, there was a bonfire at the shore in the distance. The construction of the large and simple barracks was completed. The number of tents was enough for two hundred thousand people. Some simple fortifications and wooden fences had also been erected. The only ridiculous thing was that the gates to the barracks were wide open. Not even a single guard was stationed there. The twenty thousand vanguard soldiers had also stopped their construction work. They laid down the construction tools and picked up their weapons. They then lined up and walked towards the numerous boats at the beach. They then lined up to get on their boats. One by one, the boats returned to the large warships in the ocean, leaving the empty barracks on the beach.

Rody had, at some point in time, taken a chair to sit down on the walls. He sneered as he watched the Roland soldiers leave behind a

good barracks. Are they not afraid that we would destroy their camp?

Rody's eyes turned cold as he said, "Commander of the Roland army, are you deliberately trying to provoke me? Are you deliberately trying to humiliate me? You deliberately left behind the barracks, that you had just built, just to tell me that you had seen through my intention. You predicted and are sure that I will not prevent you from disembarking? And will not attack your vanguards?"

Rody was then lost in thought as he said, "You fearlessly got ashore. Don't you know that we have the advantage on land? You swaggered, with excitement to get ashore; are you really so confident?"

He looked at the long lines of the barracks near the coast. Right now it was totally empty. It would be completely filled tomorrow.

The major war is about to begin, but the first day of the war passed peacefully.

Chapter 172: Testing the Waters

Thunder City was located at the edge of the Strait of Thunder. The city wall was only a few kilometers away from the beach. It could be said that Thunder City was a naturally exquisite outpost fortress.

If the people from the Roland Continent intended to disembark on the Radiant Continent, the most appropriate place would be at the northern coastline outside Thunder City.

Perhaps God, in the creation of the world, deliberately gave the Radiant Continent a fine terrain. The coastline of the Radiant Continent at the Strait of Thunder had a lot of whirlpools, reefs and steep cliffs. There were very few beaches. There were even fewer places for landing a big military force. But there is one exception. Thunder City's beach front is flat and large, a perfect landing spot.

The city wall of Thunder City was constructed according to the standard of a first-grade fortress. It was a full military fortress. There were very few civilian residences in the city. The city walls were completely built using special materials from the North. Large and sturdy boulders about twelve meters tall and four meters wide were used to form a circular shape.

Thunder City was not large. It could only accommodate a maximum of two hundred thousand soldiers. At the moment, there were fifty thousand Flame Knights from the God's religion, fifty thousand Lightning God's Whip cavalrymen, and fifty thousand elite heavy armor infantrymen from the Northwest Legion.

Tiger coldly looked at the information in front of him. He then walked out of the ship's hold to the deck and gazed into the distance in the morning sun. He could vaguely see Thunder City.

"We must first capture Thunder City." The Supreme Commander

of the Roland Continent Southern Expedition Coalition Forces, Tiger, sighed gently. The first step of the crusade would be to capture Thunder City.

First of all, the coalition army of the Roland continent would need a strong base to reorganize their troops. They would also need a strong transit station. For the expedition to the south with a strong base that was near the coastline, supplies from the Roland continent could be sent to their front lines smoothly.

The problem was that the Radiant Empire's ferocity on land was frightening even to Tiger. He was especially afraid of the Duke of the Tulip Family. That family has had military commanders throughout every generation. The Radiant Empire has a large and elite army. Once the Roland Continent's army was ashore, they must immediately build a solid military stronghold. In case their opponents mobilized their soldiers to recklessly attack, then they would need a strong military fortress as a staging and breather area.

Tiger did not want to encounter the enemy cavalry the moment they reached the shore. The soldiers needed to rest for a while. After all, the soldiers felt very tired after traveling across the bumpy waves for approximately ten days.

Another very important point was that Thunder City had a considerable amount of forage, weapons and a variety of military supplies. Capturing Thunder City would provide them with a lot of supplies.

Of course, there was another reason which Tiger did not mention...

Tiger was not optimistic about this crusade. [His Knight's Spirit forced him to swear allegiance to his King and the Temple.](#) However, he still felt uneasy. Would it be wise to fight recklessly on land, against the Radiant Empire? The coalition armies from the Roland Continent may be large, but they were not strong.

Could they really make it?

We must occupy Thunder City because this stronghold is closest to the coastline! This is because, in future, if we were defeated, we can use the city to hold off the pursuers from the Radiant Empire. At that time, we can rely on the protection of this rugged military fortress to enable our soldiers to retreat to the ocean.

Tiger also knew that, besides him, his opponent also understood this fact. That was why a large number of troops had gathered in the city. Besides that, the troops were the Lightning God's Whip led by the Empire's Duke of the Tulip Family.

Tiger looked, from a distance, at the banner flying above the Thunder City. He could not see it clearly as he was too far away, but he knew that the banner was the Tulip Family's war banner.

After taking a deep breath, the Supreme Commander of the Roland Continent gave an order. "Disembark!"

The morning sun shone brilliantly on the vast ocean. Thousands of large black ships were on the move. Half of those warships were, like what Milo had said, first-grade ships that could accommodate more than a thousand soldiers.

They lowered numerous small boats, densely grouped together like ants. And then they started to swarm to the coast like locusts...

The Imperial soldiers on the city wall of Thunder City looked in awe. After all, they had not fought a war against the Roland Continent in hundreds of years. Although it was a known fact that the people of the Roland Continent were very powerful in the ocean, when they actually saw the huge army, the soldiers of the Empire could only stare blankly.

The beach was noisy as countless soldiers from the Roland Continent disembarked. They then moved a large quantity of materials and equipment into the barracks. When looked from atop the city wall, those soldiers were like busy worker ants.

"Your Excellency the Duke, do we continue to wait?" Sieg could not help but frown.

Rody looked at the sun in the sky and replied, "We wait! This batch which disembarked was only about one hundred thousand soldiers. I will wait until at least several hundred thousand of their soldiers have disembarked before attacking. I want them to leave their familiar ocean, come onto land and spill their blood dry under our city wall."

A strange scene appeared on the second day of the war.

Large groups of Roland Coalition armies disembarked on the beach in full swing. However, the soldiers of the Empire in Thunder City did not bother about them. Both parties occasionally looked at each other, but they did not fight at all. Not even a single arrow was shot.

The only thing that surprised Rody was the huge fleet in the ocean. The warships had already densely covered almost the whole ocean. A steady stream of soldiers reached the shore and disembarked. Their numbers increased from two hundred thousand until it was over six hundred thousand.

The barracks on the beach, which originally looked huge, now seemed too small to accommodate all the soldiers. The shouts from people and the neighs from horses filled the whole beach. That could even be heard by the soldiers on the city wall of Thunder City, some distance away.

After three full days, the Roland army had finally completed their disembarkation. The huge barracks then looked like a dense forest. The only thing that Rody did, every day, was to stand on the wall to observe the landing of his opponent and then mentally count the number of soldiers his opponent had.

He was slightly surprised with the results of his calculation. There were at least eight hundred thousand soldiers. This was a very large number.

Are the people on the Roland continent mad? They had sent almost half of their soldiers from the Roland Continent here. Did they really think that a mish mash coalition of the armies of the dozen kingdoms on Roland continent could defeat the army of the Radiant Empire?

Rody's eyes were very sharp. After three days of observation, he could accurately tell the strength of the coalition armies of the Roland Continent.

Out of the eight hundred thousand soldiers, only two hundred thousand or less had reached the standards of the elite army of the Empire. There were two cavalries that looked extremely strong. They were probably the strongest knights on the Roland Continent. However, Rody was not sure if there were any Temple Holy Knight groups among them.

As for the rest of the army, Rody was too lazy to properly gauge them. They were mainly inferior soldiers. There were very few cavalries. They were mostly infantries. However, there was a great difference between these infantries and the elite heavy-armored infantries of the Empire.

Their soldiers lacked equipment. They did not even have good armor. Some of them didn't even have proper military uniforms. Most of the infantries' armors were simply a few pieces of scrap iron placed at only several vital parts of their bodies. They also had a variety of weapons such as swords, broad swords, spears, and lances...

There was also a strange army that surprised Rody. It was probably the legendary war chariot army. There were thousands of such two-wheeled chariots. Each chariot was equipped with a horse and three soldiers: a driver and two more holding lances. Two long blades could be found protruding out of the wheels of the chariot. With a glance, Rody could see how terrible that type of weapon was. Those chariots were specially made to kill the opponent infantries.

However, the shortcomings of the chariots were also very obvious. Rody sneered and then ignored it

Other than the unexpectedly large number of troops, Rody did not feel uneasy. Every day, he routinely visited the barracks. After that, he would discuss some issues with Sieg. However, he rarely met with the other commanding officers.

The only thing that disturbed him was the presence of the Bishop Elder.

One day, the Bishop Elder went up the wall. When he saw the huge enemy barracks on the distant shore, he exclaimed and immediately turned pale.

He immediately strongly recommended the Duke of the Tulip Family to request for reinforcements from His Majesty.

That was obvious. The entire war zone in the North only had four hundred thousand soldiers while their opponents had twice that number.

A request to His Majesty the Emperor should be made to gather more reserve soldiers in a major way. Forced conscription may also be necessary.

Rody just looked at him coldly and faintly said, "I know."

Sieg looked at the Bishop Elder, who had lost his wits and left the wall. He then sighed and sneered, "That fool! Can't he tell that our opponent's army force may be large, but they do not really have many elite soldiers? Although most of them were holding weapons and wearing armors, from the way they walked, one can easily tell that they are simply a group of farmers who had just put down their hoes."

Milo lightly said, "There is no need to talk about that garbage. However, the two cavalries over there looked pretty capable. We just need to pay attention to them. We cannot attack cavalries. But we can grind them down slowly.

Rody laughed, "Grind them down? This does not seem necessary. I never intended to fight a decisive battle in Thunder City."

He then smiled and said, "I have decided. We will guard this place for ten days. After ten days, we will give up Thunder City and then retreat internally towards the Northern Province."

Sieg and Milo looked at each other. Milo then showed a strange expression and coldly said, "Seth, you are really cunning. You are afraid of them running away, so you intend to lure them deeper into the continent?"

Rody nodded and said, "Thunder City is too near to the coastline. They can immediately escape unless they were lured deeper into the continent. I want to eliminate their eight hundred thousand soldiers in the Radiant Continent."

Rody sighed and whispered, "This way, there should be a few decades of peace for the Empire."

The calm ended on the eighth day of their disembarkment.

The Roland Continent Coalition Army's Supreme Commander, General Tiger, gave the commander of Thunder City, the Duke of the Tulip Family a letter of challenge. The letter said that the two sides would have their decisive battle below the city walls on the afternoon of the next day.

When they saw the letter of challenge, Rody and Sieg looked at each other and started to laugh.

Milo also had a strange expression. "If these Roland heathens want to fight, then go ahead. Come and attack us. Why do they need to write us a declaration of war?"

Rody thought for a while and said, "Well, let's just fight. We have not fought against the Roland army for a hundred years. It is good to test their strength, first. Tomorrow, General Milo and I will lead the soldiers out and fight them below the wall."

Sieg wanted to say something, but Rody shook his head and said,

"The Lightning God's Whip is our trump card. We cannot take them out first. Tomorrow, General Sieg, you just watch the battle from above the wall."

The prelude to the war.

The afternoon sun was dazzling, and there was a dull sound of intensive drumming. The coalition armies of Roland, a team at a time, slowly left their barracks and formed a huge battle formation in the wilderness, below the city wall. The infantry stood in a phalanx formation in the middle while the cavalry formed two lines at the side. However, the strange war chariots did not appear.

The gate of the Thunder City opened. Fifty thousand infantries, wearing strong armors, marched out neatly. They held swords and shields in their hands as they formed a phalanx formation below the city wall.

The sea breeze was humid and salty. The afternoon sun caused the soldiers to sweat. Rody and Milo stood in the middle of the formation and coldly looked at their opponents.

"Looks like our opponent's commander is also very cautious. He sent out so many people, yet he is only just testing us." Milo whispered as he looked at Rody with the corners of his eyes.

Rody did not say anything. He looked at the enemy in the distance.

A person, who was more than two meters tall, appeared from the middle of the battle formation. He was as big as Randt and had a huge horn in his mouth. He then blew the horn.

Ooo! Ooo! Ooo!

"For honor!" One knight pulled out his sword.

"For honor!" The others also started to shout into the sky. The front row of the Roland army then began to move. Initially, the soldiers moved slowly forward. After that, they started to run faster and faster. Finally, those soldiers who were running in front

raised the weapons in their hand. After a roar, they charged at the soldiers of the Radiant Empire.

Sieg, who was on the walls, sighed and shook his head. "Downright inferior!"

He ordered the archers on the wall to shoot. The archers pulled on the bows and shot their arrows forty-five degrees into the air.

When the first batch of the Roland infantries was still rushing forward, they suddenly heard the sound of arrows coming from the sky. Some of the soldiers had collapsed before they had a chance to raise their shields. Even for those who were holding their shields, in the face of the dense arrows, they were also hit by the arrows. However, most of the Roland soldiers continued to scream and rushed forward.

"Fortify the shields!" Milo raised his voice and shouted.

The front row soldiers of the Radiant Empire fiercely slammed their huge shields into the ground. The sharp shields embedded their edges into the ground and became a solid shield wall.

"Ready..."

"Ready... The back row, push forward."

"Ready..."

The officer shouted loudly as he looked at the enemies getting closer. The rapid steps seemed to rumble.

Finally, the surging wave of Roland soldiers fiercely rammed into the shield wall.

The sound of clashing continued as one army fiercely rammed into the other. Some parts of the shield wall had immediately gapped opened. However, when the gaps were opened, the Roland soldiers who fell into the gaps were desperate to find themselves facing numerous sharp swords. These soldiers were immediately cut into pieces. The first wave of the attack all hit the shield wall

and were severely injured. Not only did they fail to break through the shields, but they had also obstructed their allies behind them.

"Remove the shields!" Milo shouted loudly. Kaka! Kaka! The shield wall suddenly split from the middle. The huge shields of the Radiant Empire were linked together as one long piece. As long as some iron chains were pulled apart, the shields would split into two.

After a cry, the Empire's heavy-armored infantry then rushed forward and fought directly with the enemy soldiers.

The Empire's heavy-armored infantry had all undergone strict professional training. These soldiers ability to fight and their ability to fight together as a team of three to five were much more superior than the soldiers from the Roland army.

Often, a Roland army's soldier tried to fence off the Empire soldier's slash. However, his head would be sent flying into the air by another soldier instead.

The moment they made contact, many people immediately howled tragically.

Rody swung his Dragon Fang sword. A golden fighting energy burst out from the sword. Those Roland soldiers who rushed towards him and came into contact with his golden fighting energy immediately broke apart into a mass of broken and bloodied flesh.

Milo's swordsmanship was much more elegant. His swordsmanship was like a dance that took a life with every move.

The heavy-armored infantries had excellent equipment and were skilled. That caused huge losses to the Roland army. A lot of Roland soldiers had successfully struck their opponents but found that they could not cut through their hard armor. They were then cut down while they were still in a daze.

"Your Excellency Tiger, please let us go!" Seeing the massacre in front of him, one of the knights told Tiger, who was beside him.

The Empire's armored infantry was like an insurmountable metal wall. A big knight said to Tiger in a low voice, "Let my knights charge into them. No matter how powerful they are, they are just infantries. I am confident that I can get rid of them!"

Tiger looked indifferently at the knight, beside him, and said, "No." He then paused and slowly said, "Have you seen their city gate? Their Lightning God's Whip must be waiting behind the city gate! I already said, today is not the day for the decisive battle! This is just to test them out! I just want those arrogant people in our army, who think that the Radiant Empire is vulnerable, to know clearly what kind of enemy we are facing!"

He paused for a while and his tone turned milder. He looked at the tall knight and whispered, "Your Excellency, your knights are an indispensable force for me. I will need you to deal with the Lightning God's Whip! Please be patient!"

Tiger immediately commanded for the second and third wave to rush up. They were like a fierce tide that crashed onto the heavy-armor infantries of the Empire. They knew that there were only fifty thousand opponent soldiers but they were unable to break through their formation. Wave after wave, they attacked. However, they were running straight into a wall and their infantries were merely courting death.

["Gordon's Infantry Regiment,](#) Seer's Infantry Regiment, Slavic's Infantry Regiment..." The knight muttered. "Can't these three regiments break through? The enemy only has fifty thousand soldiers..."

Tiger sneered and said, "Weren't the Gordon Kingdom, Seer Kingdom and the Slavic Kingdom acting crazily in the camp last night? So today, let them personally test the sharpness of the enemy's blades and the hardness of the enemy's armors." He then looked at the restless knight, beside him, and said, "I do not want any disobedience in my barracks. I know you want to rush forward but our opponent is supporting their formation below the wall. Do

you want to let your knights be live targets for the archers? Can you see those boulders on the walls? Do you want your knights to withstand those boulders when they dropped them?’

Rody’s armor was already stained red with blood. Naturally, all the blood belonged to the enemy. After bathing in the blood of the Mystic Dragon, the ordinary weapons of the soldiers could not harm him.

A golden light appeared and another head flew off. At the same time, the light slashed another Roland soldier into two halves before it disappeared.

Rody was somber and looked coldly at the enemy collapsing like the retreating tide.

Although the heavy-armor infantries were much more powerful than the opponent's army, after numerous waves of attacks they also suffered substantial losses and the soldiers were exhausted. Rody looked at Sieg who was on the walls. He then watched his opponents slowly withdraw. He coldly said, "The first assault... It looks like they were just testing us."

At night, the soldiers reported that the Roland army’s reinforcements have arrived.

Rody immediately took Sieg and Milo up the city wall. Under the moonlight, they could vaguely see a white colored, medium-sized warship approaching.

Milo looked at the banner on the warships and frowned. He then whispered, "It's the sorcerers of the Roland army. Their sorcerers are here!"

Rody shrugged his shoulders and looked at the Flame Knights below the city wall. He then lightly said, "Sorcerers? It looks like those people from God's religion will soon be useful."

神殿 shéndiàn actually mean 'shrine'. It is translated here as Temple. Both continents might or might not have the same God. If

they do, then they differ only in name. Temple refers to the religious body of the Roland Continent. (I wrongly referred to their religious body as 'Church' much earlier.) Church refers to the religious body of the Radiant Continent. As for the Gods, whether they are the same god or not, it would be Protoss for the Radiant Continent and Kara in the Roland Continent.

Yes. It says 'Gordon'. Probably someone else with the same name.

Chapter 173: Achilles' Heel (1)

The horn to attack sounded at dawn.

When the sky just started to turn bright, the coalition armies of Roland started its first siege.

Dozens of stone catapults had been assembled and then, following a whistling sound, big and small stones flew into the sky. These stones ruthlessly smashed into Thunder City.

The magicians of Thunder City immediately drifted into the sky. Several hundreds of magicians, at the same time, using the same method, propped up a huge air shield above the city wall. Numerous stones hit the air shield and immediately bounced off.

However, the size of the air shield had a limit. Those boulders that smashed into the city destroyed a few buildings and caused the nearby people to scatter and hide. However, from time to time, there were some unlucky ones who got crushed to death.

Rody stood on the walls and looked coldly at the flesh and blood fly everywhere. He had a solemn expression and his eyes were devoid of emotion. He was now on the battlefield and, mentally, was a steely commander who had spilled blood in the Northwest, the commander who had dealt with the rebellion in Westwood province and the commander who had suppressed the mutiny in the South.

"There is no easy way out of siege warfare. We just have to keep defending." Milo stood beside him and also had a cold expression.

A catapult was finally then pushed out from within the city. This catapult was different from the Roland army's catapult. This catapult did not throw stones but flaming earthen jars. The flames on the jars hissed and the strong smell of oil tickled the nose of the soldiers. Rody turned to see that the catapults were ready and then he nodded his head. Sieg then waved his hand and the catapults

were released.

One after another, balls of fire were thrown into the sky. With long and flaming tails, they crashed into the Roland army's formation. After that, there were brilliant sparks and red flames flashed from time to time, in the middle of the Roland army's formation. When the sparks splashed on the soldiers, they started to scream.

Buckets filled with sea water were then brought and poured onto the flames. However, the Roland army was surprised as the flames did not extinguish. Instead, it grew bigger.

Many soldiers were swallowed up by the flames, while the others scattered and retreated due to fear. [Flames that could not be extinguished with water!](#) That strange scene caused many of the Roland army to become frightened. Were the heathens of the Radiant continent really being protected by the devil?

The dazzling and blossoming sparks burst within the Roland army's formation. Even though many of the Roland army's catapults were not hit directly, but as long as they were splashed with a little bit of the sparks, they would immediately start to burn. The fire grew more and more intense and could not be extinguished.

"Fools!" Tiger stood at the back as he looked at the flames and shouted. "If water cannot extinguish those flames, then use sand instead! Just pour sand from the top!"

Rody stood on the walls and sneered as he watched the Roland army getting themselves burned. "Looks like Dandong's words were true. Water cannot extinguish the flames created by this black oil. Instead, the flames become more intense."

Sieg laughed and replied, "Well, the Roland army had actually learned about the catapults from us two hundred years ago. They always imitate us."

The Roland army had a lot of soldiers and the beach had a lot of sand. They kept pouring sand over the fire and the flames were eventually extinguished.

The Roland army's sorcerers finally started to act. Hundreds of white-robed and senior sorcerers floated in the sky and started to chant together. The magical elements in the air started to become violent. Large tracts of dark clouds suddenly appeared in the originally calm sky. The scary black clouds grew denser and thicker. Occasionally, there were several huge flashes of lightning in the sky and faint thunders were heard.

The clouds started to descend and completely covered the sky above Thunder City. However, the sky above the distant ocean remained clear and even the sun was still bright.

"Damn, what sorcery is this?" Rody frowned.

Although this kind of lightning sorcery was common, such a large-scale made it look strange. At that moment, suddenly a lightning ruthless struck part of the wall and caused an explosion. The sturdy wall seemed to tremble and a dozen soldiers were engulfed in flames and charred to death. Many of the surrounding soldiers fell. Many of them became paralyzed and dropped their weapons.

"Where are the magicians!" Rody roared loudly. The magicians in the city immediately prepared large and small air shields to cover up the wall.

However, soon even more horrible things started to happen.

Lightning crackled among the dark clouds in the sky. There was a loud thunder as lightning struck down. Before the thundering sound disappeared, another lightning struck again. In a blink of an eye, a series of lightning continuously struck the city wall.

A huge thunderous roar blasted the ears. A huge lightning lighted up the entire sky. The city wall shook. The air shields created by

the Empire's magicians started to get dim. Finally, blood spurted out from the mouths of a few of these magicians and some fell from the sky. As the lightning strikes turned more violent, the remaining magicians could no longer endure anymore. The wind in the sky turned more and more violent, as more and more magicians started to fall from the sky. They could no longer maintain their air shields above!

Finally, even the Bishop Elder started to sweat and slowly descended from the sky. Eventually, a lightning broke the air shield and a magician was struck by lightning. He did not even show any kind of reaction as his body was torn apart by the lightning and burned up. On the city wall, hundreds of soldiers fell. Black smoke emitted from their bodies which were soon charred.

"What is going on?" Rody shouted. "Even if they were sorcerers, they should not be so powerful!"

As the thunderous sound grew louder, Rody suddenly roared and pulled out his Dragon Fang sword. He then rushed towards the sky.

As the lightning struck, a golden fighting energy instantly burst out from Rody's body. The Dragon Fang sword glowed with a golden light and fiercely slashed out some flames to deflect the lightning. The lightning then struck the ground outside the wall and blasted a deep hole in the ground.

"Spread out!" Rody's golden flame grew more than two meters high in the sky. The Dragon Fang sword suddenly emitted a dazzling ball of light. It was so bright that even the distant sun looked pale. There was a whistling sound as a huge blade of light fiercely shot towards the thick dark clouds in the sky.

As the flow of air turned violent, the blade of light struck the seemingly solid dark clouds and caused a crack. As the wind blew violently, a hole appeared in the clouds. Rody's golden fighting

energy became more intense and then he cursed, "You are not the only one who knows how to strike in succession."

Rody continued to shout madly as he kept swinging his Dragon Fang sword. Countless large blades of light shot out from his sword. After a series of explosions, the dark clouds in the sky started to disperse. The sky gradually grew brighter, and there was no longer any lightning...

From the distant barracks, the Roland army's sorcerers saw what happened and were stunned. One of the old men, with a white beard, could not help but murmur, "That... Is that guy human?"

"This is the Dragon's power." Rody felt surprised. He did not feel well. He knew that he had used too much power and had aroused the Mystic Dragon. He took a deep breath and suddenly, clenched his fist before hitting himself fiercely in the chest. After that, he spat out a mouthful of blood and the boiling feeling in his chest eased off.

Rody slowly fell above the city wall. Sieg immediately rushed up to support Rody. Rody shook his head as he wiped the blood from his mouth and said, "I am alright." He then paused and said, "There is something strange about our opponent's sorcerers. Even their Saints do not have such terrifying spells... such intensive lightning."

Tiger had a gloomy expression as he looked at the exhausted sorcerers. He then ordered the barracks to deploy the huge arrow towers. Each tower was ten meters tall and had heavy wheels at the bottom. Countless soldiers started to push the towers. The towers creaked as it slowly moved towards the city wall. These towers were wrapped with layers of thick leather to protect itself from the enemy arrows and fireballs as it slowly moved towards the walls.

A big group of soldiers with heavy shields moved forward. From time to time, there were miserable cries from the fallen soldiers,

lying on the ground. However, the Roland army did not stop and trampled on their companion's carcasses as they slowly approached the wall.

The Empire's soldiers on the wall aimed the arrows at their enemies. They were waiting for their enemies to get closer to the wall. Big stones were also thrown, raining down like hailstones.

However, this time the Roland army had dispatched the regular infantries. These soldiers were much stronger and more skillful than the soldiers from the previous day. They had high morale. They were also brave and decisive. After trampling on the corpses of their companions, they finally arrived at the gate. They then threw away their heavy shields and took out a large log kept beneath the shields. Numerous soldiers then used this large log to ram the gate. The loud pounding sound ruthlessly hammered the hearts of the Empire's soldiers.

After heavy losses, the bulky towers finally reached the edge of the wall. Other than a few towers that were smashed by the Empire's catapults, the archers on the remaining towers started to shoot arrows at the soldiers on the walls. The heights of the towers were about as tall as the city walls. One side of a tower broke open and a large plank fell from it, crashing on the top of the battlement. The iron hooks on the ends of the planks tightly caught onto the wall. Hundreds of heavily armed Roland soldiers then charged out from inside the tower.

Sieg had already pulled out his sword and shouted, "Drive them down!"

The soldiers from both armies roared and clashed against each other. The sounds of the swords clashing were endless and accompanied by tragic screams.

The Roland soldiers who came out from the arrow towers were carefully selected elites. They were all strong but they were disadvantaged in numbers. The defenders of the Empire

summoned all their courage and stepped forward. The city wall was like a bloody hell, with broken limbs flying and occasionally miserable cries of people falling off the wall.

Rody had lost track of the number of people he had killed. However, the opponent's infantry reached the top of the city wall. Long siege ladders had already been erected. The soldiers joining the assault from the arrow towers had taken the pressure off the soldiers climbing the siege ladders. More and more of the Roland soldiers managed to climb the walls.

The magicians of the Empire were exhausted after continuously shooting out fireballs. The large number of Roland soldiers did not give them the luxury of resting.

Rody's Dragon Fang sword was like a weapon specialized in taking lives. Those enemies who met him were not able to resist his sword. Rody cut down a Roland soldier, in front of him and at that same time that soldier dragged down with him another soldier who had just climbed the ladder. Rody then stepped forward and slashed the ladder, causing all of the soldiers on the ladder to fall...

Rody felt a sharp wind behind him. He turned around and blocked an attack that came from behind. In front of him was an armored Roland knight. He held [a long cross-shaped sword](#) in his hand. This sword was dripping in blood. His face was also covered in blood. From the appearance of the knight, it was evident that he was a Senior Knight of the Roland army. That man gritted his teeth and said, "Your Excellency is..."

"Get lost..." Rody did not spare him a glance and swung down his Dragon Fang sword. The knight raised his sword to defend but then his cross-shaped sword split into two like [tofu](#). That slash by Rody cut through the knight's shoulder, including the armor. Rody then kicked the body aside and quickly shouted at Seig. "Now!"

After saying that, Rody jumped down from the city wall and created a deep hole where he landed.

Among the Roland coalition armies outside the city, Tiger looked at the fight on the wall with a dignified expression. He watched the groups of densely packed infantries moving towards the wall and the fierce battle on top of the wall. The Radiant Empire's archers were no longer able to stop the infantries from advancing.

Tiger then thought to himself. Perhaps we would be able to capture Thunder City, today.

However, at that moment, a shocking scene took place.

Suddenly, there was a loud sound of a horn from the city. The huge and heavy gate opened slowly and the soldiers, who were ramming the gate with the giant log, were shocked by the situation. They then showed an expression of fear and despair.

Tiger could see clearly something black and metallic rushing out from the city gate. The cavalry that rushed out of the gate immediately ripped the soldiers apart with their spears.

It is the Lightning God's Whip!

Countless horseshoes thundered on the earth, announcing the black armored cavalry. They were divided into two teams and charged to the sides of the city gate along the walls, Kill! Below the city wall, the coalition infantries with swords in their hands, were shocked. Not until the cavalry's spears had pierced their bodies and after they screamed, did the other infantries suddenly realized that their enemies had opened the gate to counterattack them.

The most miserable ones were the soldiers holding the ladders in place, under the city wall. They had already used up most of their strength to hold up the ladders and were already exhausted. When their enemies charged at them with their spears, they could only close their eyes and wait for their deaths. Many of the coalition infantries, below the wall, were scattered as they were being chased by the cavalry. The infantries used for the siege had no armor. They were light infantries. That was because heavy infantries would become a fatal burden when climbing the wall.

However, now that they were attacked by the enemy cavalry, the lack of any defensive abilities had become their fatal weaknesses!

The battle under the wall continued. However, the Lightning God's Whip no longer chased along both sides of the wall. Their target was those Roland infantry formations approaching the gate.

The thunderous sounds of the horse's hooves drowned out the cries of killing. Numerous Lightning God's Whip emerged from the gates, like a steady flow of steel, forming a triangle charge formation and raced ahead. The horses continued to run towards that formation and the trampling shook the sky.

As the horses trampled the dust flew up and the heavy armors of the cavalry issued crisp clashing sounds.

The Roland infantries, who were ready to move forward to the city wall, were stunned. They subconsciously stopped when they saw the large cavalry suddenly charge out from the city.

A cloud of dust grew nearer as the black cavalry approached the Roland infantry, the horsemen bent forward into their saddles, their weapons pointed forward like a forest of sharp spears.

"Kill!"

Tens of thousands of voices shouted, at the same time. The front charging cavalry easily pierced through the shields of the infantries and their fragile bodies. Blood splashed and sprayed all over as they screamed tragically.

The charge by the Lightning God's Whip immediately ripped apart the follow-up charge formation of the Roland coalition infantries.

Although the Roland coalition infantries advancing in front was huge and densely packed, but when faced with the attack by the Lightning God's Whip, their formation exposed a strange weakness. After the front lines were broken through, scattered deserters obstructed the way. That was because the formations

were too dense and the defeated deserters ended up toppling their own soldiers behind them.

The Lightning God's Whip's charge had scattered the Roland infantries. The armors that they wore and the long spears in their hands were fatal to the coalition infantries. The coalition infantries often slashed at the cavalry only to find that their blades could not harm their enemies. On the other hand, the cavalry's long spears could easily impale their bodies from afar.

Tiger's face was livid. He drew out his sword and shouted, "Knights, stop them! You just need to stop them and we will capture the city today!"

Safety tip. A fireman taught me that we should not use water to put out fires (Especially if oil catches fire.). Most fires would only grow bigger. Make sure to use a fire extinguisher.

This is what the raw says but did not sound right. How did the soldiers carry heavy shields and hide that ramming log beneath the shield?

A knight's longsword. The longswords used in the Empire, jiandao, 劍刀, are basically just normal swords that are long. The swords the Roland knights used are the classic medieval longswords/Swiss longswords.

Soft white blocks made by coagulating soy milk. Also known as bean curds.

Chapter 174: Achilles' Heel (2)

The sound of horses galloping and metal clashing was endless. The silver armor of the Roland knights gleamed coldly in the sun. They raised their [cross-swords](#) and screamed as they charged towards the Lightning God's Whip.

The silver armor of these knights had a white cross on it. They believed that they were fighting for their God and their faith. They believed that their truth, courage, and faith would grant them victory.

Naturally, this was only what they believed. As the infantries of the Roland coalition army scattered in all directions, Rody could no longer hear and differentiate all the various sounds. He was only focused on what was in front of him.

In front of him, the charging Lightning God's Whip moved like black waves in a diamond formation as they fiercely clashed against the silver armored Roland knights.

The front most warriors from both sides were badly crushed. Some fell off their horses; some broke their arms and legs; some were immediately trampled by the horses; while others managed to get up holding their weapons as they roared and charged at the enemy.

Rody was at the front end of the diamond formation and was undoubtedly the strongest one there.

His Dragon Fang sword shone with a golden brilliance; a beautiful yet deadly golden brilliance.

There was a violent energy in every slash he made. This often tore apart his enemy's armor even before his sword hit them. Blood continued to splatter in front of him as heads flew into the air. The hot red blood soaking on his body began to turn into black and red cold patches.

The Sauron Kingdom's Royal Knights were rapidly losing their fight with the Lightning God's Whip even though they had more men, they were just as brave, and they had a strong faith of conviction.

Unfortunately for them, the enemy soldiers were like demons.

The frequent sound of the horn came from Thunder City, playing a unique alternating long and short tune. The rhythm seemed to incite the soldiers of the Empire and boost their spirits. The call of the horn brought forth a spirit from the Lightning God's Whip warriors that exceeded the extremes of bravery, approaching fanaticism. They fearlessly faced the enemy's spears and rushed forwards, their own spears thrusting into their enemy. As long as they were not down, as long as they were still alive they would draw their scimitar and slash at the nearest Roland knight...

They slashed at the legs of the horses or used up the last of their energy to jump into and bring down the knights from their horses. Some even stood steadfast to block the horses. They did not know fear, pain or death. They were fanatics.

The Royal Knights thus started to fall within a short while. For each soldier they killed, they had to pay almost three times the price or more.

The Regiment Commander of the Royal Knights died the moment the battle started. He was a proud warrior but, unfortunately, he was at the front of the cavalry and the first person he encountered was Rody!

Truthfully speaking, this Regiment Commander was very powerful. Rody had only just lopped off the head of a Roland knight when the Regiment Commander thrust his spear and struck Rody! However, Rody's body only shook from that mighty strike while that Commander felt like he had struck a hard stone. The Regiment Commander of the Royal Knights was still stunned when Rody easily slashed his neck.

This guy. Why is he not skewered... These were the last thoughts of the Regiment Commander of the Royal Knights.

In front of the rest of the Roland army, the Sauron Kingdom's elite knights had clashed against the Lightning God's Whip only for a short while but had almost lost... The wave of silver armors was rapidly overcome by the wave of black armors.

A ridiculous scene appeared on the battlefield. The situation was like ducks being corralled. The once proud Roland knights were chased by the Lightning Gods Whip like ducks all over the battlefield... or like sheep in the face of lions. What was even more terrifying was that the defeated soldiers retreated back to the Roland army bringing along the ferocious Lightning God's Whip.

"Spear units! Get ready!" Tiger immediately ordered. His eyes had already turned red. What the hell! Are the Lightning God's Whip really so powerful?

Originally, Tiger had wanted to use the forward group to hold the enemy and then send out more knights on the sides to pin down the Lightning God's Whip. No matter the price, as long as they could destroy the Lightning God's Whip, it would be worth it.

However, he did not expect the proud Royal Knights to actually ... they could not even block... they lost the moment they made contact with the enemy! The knights that were supposed to flank the Lightning God's Whip had only just started to rush out!

"Your Excellency. That is our own people!" A Senior Holy Knight could not help but speak anxiously.

"It is too late! If we do not stop these idiots, we will be defeated!" Tiger looked back at him fiercely. Tiger could no longer try to save them. If the defeated soldiers returned and caused their own formation to break while bringing along the enemy cavalry, there would be a disaster.

At that time, another group of Roland Knights charged out from

the left. They must intercept and stop the Lightning God's Whip. If only they could intercept the Lightning God's Whip!

Rody noticed the movement on the left and suddenly turned his horse. He allowed the retreating enemy in front of him to escape and then charged towards the Roland knights on the left.

Behind him, three Lightning God's Whip men immediately waved their banners and, like a torch, signaled the new direction for the black armor wave.

"Rush at them!" Rody shouted.

"Kill!"

The black wave suddenly changed direction. They ignored the retreating enemy in front and followed their commander. Surging to the left, they never looked back. The knights that came from the left were the Roland continent's proud Holy Knights. They were the knights of the Temple and were known as the strongest knights on the Roland continent.

These knights had different weapons compared to the ordinary Roland knights. They wore a black cloak over their armors and black plumes over their helmets. They carried spears and huge shields that could form a steel wall.

Rody's horse rushed to the front and his eyes flashed. He suddenly raised his Dragon Fang sword and made a strange signal. The cavalry behind him then suddenly transformed!

The wide diamond formation started to shrink as the cavalry started to crowd together and the formation became narrow and packed.

Rody then raised his Dragon Fang spear and rapidly slashed out eight to nine swathes of light. The blades of light swept near the ground as it threw up a wide dust trail. It brought along a powerful force that smashed into the shield walls of the Holy Knights.

The sturdy shield formation cracked open with a few big gaps. A

dozen knights were dismembered right where the gaps were. Rody then charged through that gap with his horse leading his men through.

Spears thrust relentlessly from both sides but Rody just swept around with his Dragon Fang Sword without even looking at them. Clang! Clang! Clang! The spears broke. With Rody taking the lead and the rest of the Lightning God's Whip following, they had already charged into the Roland knight's formation through that gap. One group had the momentum of a lightning charge. The other group was in the process of regrouping its formation. Thus, the frontlines of the Holy Knights were immediately broken.

Rody was undoubtedly a great path breaker. He violently smashed through the Roland army to create a passage. The Lightning God's Whip followed closely and then massacred the disorganized enemy to their heart's content.

However, the Holy Knights, being the strongest army in the Roland Continent, were different from the Sauron Kingdom's knights. The Lightning God's Whip immediately felt the difference.

This group of knights was much more powerful than the Royal Knights in terms of strength and skills. They did not scream at all and had indifferent expressions. Their eyes remained the same as they silently battled with the warriors from the Lightning God's Whip.

They were like cold-blooded killing machines. It did not matter if they were killing or they were being killed. They were completely emotionless. No anger, no sadness, no despair, no pain. Even when they were impaled by a spear, they only closed their eyes and fall silently.

This was a group of powerful enemies, equally matched with the Lightning God's Whip.

However, the Lightning God's Whip had already been fighting

for some time and their momentum started to weaken. Gradually, their momentum was getting blocked and the wave became stagnant. The two armies have merged into each other. Whichever way the Lightning God's Whip dashed, their opponents stood steadfastly in their way.

The Holy Knights were like quicksand and managed to temporarily stall the Lightning God's Whip. Momentarily, it was a deadlock! Soon after, Rody realized his soldiers had lagged behind. The Holy Knights had blocked and surrounded them.

Rody growled and tugged the reins hard with his left hand. The horse, Garros, gave a long neigh. It turned and headed towards the back.

The blood in Rody's chest started to boil as his body shone with a dazzling golden light. He had just slashed a knight in front into two when he felt two spears thrust at him, one from the front and one from the back.

Rody made some quick moves with his sword and managed to block the two attacks. This was the first time since that charge that someone managed to stop his fierce attacks and his swift momentum. Both armored knights were middle-aged and had long sideburns. However, these two were different from the other Holy Knights. The black cloak that they wore over their armor had a huge cross and a golden hexagram.

Naturally, Rody did not understand the meaning of the pattern on the cloak. That pattern symbolized the knight's honor and respect — the mark of a first-class knight in the Roland continent! But no nonsense could be tolerated on the battlefield and Rody was not willing to waste any more time. He was the commanding officer of the Lightning God's Whip and also their assault charge banner. He could not allow them to obstruct him and slow down his momentum.

Rody then quickly slashed a few times, on the right and on the

left. Clang! Clang! Clang! Swords and spears broke all over. The knight on the left groaned and his body shook. His hands were also red with blood. The horse also retreated a few steps. The knight on the right growled and swept his spear at Rody. Rody sneered and slashed his opponent on the shoulder without even looking at the spear.

Ping! Chi! Two sounds rang out. One sound came as a spear slammed into Rody. Rody just shook his body but grabbed the spearhead with one hand. The knight was shocked. This attack could have even smashed a stone wall into pieces. But this guy had firmly blocked the attack with his own body!

When he saw his opponent grabbing the spear, the knight was stunned. Before he had a chance to react, Rody's sword had already found its mark.

In that instant, a golden flash ripped into the knight's throat and bright red blood splashed out. The knight felt his throat turn cold and a salty taste in his mouth.

He knew that it was his own blood. His final thoughts were: It tastes salty.

The other knight roared and swung his spear. The black fighting energy on the spear caused his cloak to flutter. Rody lowered his spear and jabbed hard into the enemy's spear. The impact made the knight feel like he was struck by lightning and shook violently. Immediately, Rody slashed rapidly several times. His opponent then raised his spear to defend himself. Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sword and the spear continued to clash. That spear was a sturdy first-grade weapon. But, it could not withstand the Dragon Fang Sword attacks and started to ring with a sound hinting that it was almost breaking up.

Finally, Rody slashed the spear into two. The blade continued its momentum and cut off the knight's arm. The arm flew off and blood splashed into Rody's face.

Rody reached out and grabbed the knight from the horse. He held the knight's neck in his hand. The knight fainted before he could even groan.

With a prisoner lying across in front of him, Rody whipped the horse hard. Garros then cried out and rushed back into the killing crowd.

Sieg and Milo were stunned as they witnessed the entire battle.

Even the Roland Coalition Army Commander, Tiger, was stunned.

Seeing it with his own eyes, the proud Milo later commented, "I have never met anyone that could fight like that! No. He is not human! On that day, on the battlefield, he is a god!"

On the other hand, Tiger later said with a little bit of envy, "On that day, if it were not because the useless Royal Knights had retreated and destroyed our formation, I would not have been too busy reorganizing the troops to dispatch a military unit to tangle with the Lightning God's Whip. At that time, only death would await the Lightning God's Whip. Unfortunately, I could only watch the opportunity disappear in front of me.

However, Tiger later also revealed some of his real thoughts especially after he was drunk. "On that day, even if we could defeat the Lightning God's Whip, we would not be able to kill that man. As long as he is on the battlefield, it is impossible to kill him!"

Rody's golden fighting energy was wrapped around himself and his horse. From afar, Rody and the horse looked like a huge ball of light. The light ball moved back and forth within the Holy Knight's formation and extracted the Lightning God's Whip, one squad at a time. Rody broke through all those that obstructed his way. Bit by bit he led his scattered squads out of the Holy Knights' tight encirclement and gradually his squads again formed a black wave ...

Rody had been slashed countless times and had been shot at by about eight arrows. However, none of them could injure him. Everyone had tried to stop him but in the end, none of them could withstand his assault.

The Lightning God's Whip started to move again. Under the leadership of the golden figure, they broke through the encircling Holy Knights and returned to Thunder City.

"cross-shaped' sword: A Chinese word search did not turn up anything that looks right. I would presume it is just a sword with a cross-shaped hilt.

Chapter 175: Achilles' Heel (3)

In the Roland barracks, in a big tent, the atmosphere was depressive. The thick tent canvas kept the sea breeze at bay. The army officers in the tent were gloomy.

Tiger's face was ashen, looking coldly at the two Royal Knights of the Sauron Kingdom. They were both Deputy Commanders; their Regimental Commander was killed in the battle. Right now, the two knight's faces were somber, their eyes filled with guilt.

Tiger firmly clenched his teeth, not saying a word. What to say? What more was there to say? Give them a good scolding? Tell them they were useless? That none of them could stop the Radiant Empire's Lightning God Whip? That the Royal Knights were a bunch of rubbish?

Tiger himself was from the Sauron Kingdom while some other people in the tent now were from the various kingdoms of the Roland Continent.

In fact, Tiger was puzzled — he himself was a Sauron Kingdom Royal Knight. In this Holy War, he was the Regiment Commander of the Sauron Kingdom Royal Knights! He had personally trained these men from the Royal Knights — he could not understand why the Roland Continent's second strongest cavalry, in front of the Lightning God's Whip, could not even win a single fight, that they had lost so quickly.

He intentionally covered up and kept quiet. But the others present here were different. A knight at the side laughed coldly; a knight in armor with a lean face. Tiger took a look at him and thought: Him again!

Tiger said to himself: "This bastard Goethe man." That man who laughed was a general from the Goethe Kingdom.

This time the coalition army comprised armies from 10 plus

Roland kingdoms. The Sauron Kingdom army was the strongest and also the biggest so, naturally, the Sauron Kingdom commander, Tiger, would be the Supreme Commander of the coalition army. But this did not mean that the other people were happy with it. After all, the 10 plus kingdoms might not have the same objective.

What's more, there had always been some disagreements, some friendships, some hatred. Even though before this expedition, the Temple had mediated, these grievances were accumulated over many years. So how can it be resolved just like that through mediation?

This representative from Goethe had clashed previously with Tiger on many occasions, intentionally as well as unintentionally. Even now, while the Gordon Kingdom was allied with the Sauron Kingdom, there would also be some friction on normal days.

The Sauron Kingdom was the strongest so no one would openly oppose them. But now that the

Sauron Kingdom's Royal Knights had suffered a crushing defeat and gave rise to such a wonderful opportunity, who would reject it? But the commander had forgotten that just a day ago, their own Goethe infantry were slaughtered by the Empire's armored infantry.

Listening to the other party's unrestrained ridicule, Tiger had already turned extremely angry.

"This is extremely shameful! Our so called strongest Sauron Knights lost right in the first fight... Sauron Knights, are you not ashamed!" That Goethe knight's voice was sharp and shrill.

The two Deputy Commanders of the Royal Knights looked somber, their faces red, trembling non-stop.

Tiger looked squarely at the Goethe knight and said, " General Golan, you are not qualified to judge the honor of the Sauron

Knights!" He immediately continued, asking his knights, "You two, why did our knights lose so badly?"

The two Deputy Regimental Commanders looked at each other and hesitated. One of them then said, "General! It is not that we have dishonored the Knights — those soldiers are just not human! They are demons. Each time they hear the horn they turn into invincible monsters! They are not mere heretics. They are a bunch of fanatical disciples of the devil. They most certainly carry a curse on themselves! They are a bunch of crazy fanatics..."

After a pause, the other knight said, "General, you saw it too. How crazy they were — this battle. We could not capture any prisoner, any injured soldier! Instead, any injured warrior would pounce on our knights and give up their lives to kill us... This is crazy! Our faith in God had never wavered, but we are human, we are not crazy!"

The first knight then said in a low voice, "But... its that Lightning God's Whip commander, that Duke of the Tulip Family... He is the embodiment of the devil ..."

Hearing the words 'Duke of the Tulip Family', the men in the tent seemed to tremble a little. That day, hundreds of thousands saw with their own eyes how fearsome the Duke was.

The Royal Knight Regimental Commander died in one stroke of the sword. Two Senior Holy Knights; one died and the other taken prisoner. Then there were countless others killed by that demon sword.

As many had witnessed, that devilish warrior rode a black horse, a blazing golden aura about him, running and galloping in and out of the thousands of warring soldiers. Nothing could stop him! Just by himself, he managed to lead his warriors out of the multiple layers of enemies that had trapped them!

So many swords and arrows struck him, but he seemed totally unharmed! That was just not human! "Hmph!" The Goethe knight

laughed coldly, not wishing to say anything. Tiger said, "General Golan, you said that the defeated knights are shameful. Then, are the Holy Knights in the same category? Then what about the infantry regiment that was defeated?"

Golan's face changed. He dared not offend the Holy Knights — once you offend the Holy Knights, you have offended the Temple. He stole a look at the two Senior Holy Knights then finally kept his mouth shut...

The Holy Knights suddenly stood up and looked at Tiger. One of them said in a low voice, "General, that Duke, there's something odd. If I am not mistaken, that Duke's strength has reached the level of the Radiant Empire's so-called Sacred Swordsman."

"Sacred Swordsman?" Tiger furrowed his eyes. "I heard that the Radiant Empire's one and only legendary Sacred Swordsman is their Palace Chief Warrior, Master Autumn."

"Yes, General Tiger." One of the Holy Knights said. "That was the rumor. But as is evidenced by the fight yesterday, a second Sacred Swordsman has emerged in the Radiant Empire! The Duke of the Tulip Family! Both Gerta and Stagu were our elite Holy Knights. They have both already achieved the highest levels of the Knights. But they could not stop the Duke at all! General Tiger, this is the reason for the disparity in strength. There is no reason to regret. A disparity in strength leads to death, not shame! As a knight that defends God, we would sacrifice our lives at any moment."

"Disparity in strength ... " Tiger furrowed his head and asked, "Even if the Duke is a Sacred Swordsman, our two Senior Holy Knights should not be much different from him, strength wise. A Senior Holy Knight should be about the same level as a Grade 5 swordsman. Even if they could not face up to a Sacred Swordsman, they should not lose so quickly."

One of the Holy Knights then said in a low voice, "General, like what you have said, two Senior Holy Knights together, even if they

are not strong enough to fight a Sacred Swordsman, they should at least be able to hold him for a while. But, at the time, I happened to be near them, and what I saw was extremely shocking..."

Thus, this Holy Knight related what he saw on the battlefield. He told how when the Holy Knight's spear struck the Duke it had totally no effect on him, and instead, as he reacted instantly he could easily kill the Holy Knight...

The other knight then sighed and said, "If after that, the Duke was attacked many times by warriors with normal swords and arrows with no effect it was expected. But, receiving a full power attack by a Senior Holy Knight is another matter!

It is not possible for a Sacred Swordsman to block with his body and escape totally unscathed if a Senior Holy Knight unleashed a full attack! You should know. Our two Senior Holy Knights are not weaker than any Sacred Swordsman. Even if they might be weaker, they could not take a direct body blow from a full power strike of a Senior Holy Knight's spear."

The men in the tent seemed to look a little fearful. A glint crossed Tiger's eyes, then he said in a trembling voice, "Unless... unless... this Duke has exceeded the Sacred Swordsman level, he had obtained ... the Domain Force?" An immediate silence froze the tent at the mention of the words 'Domain Force'. The expressions on their faces were extremely pitiful.

Domain Force?

What is the concept of Domain Force? A warrior with Domain Force is almost at the level of God!

It is impossible for a knight or a warrior to kill a Domain Force guy. Legend says that a warrior with Domain Force can change the rules of space and time, can annihilate an army with just a finger...

Normal people would not be able to understand a Domain Force guy...

That is not to say that a Domain Force practitioner cannot be killed. He is still a human, not a god. His power is not inexhaustible — in the legend of God and Devil war, a human general sacrificed 100,000 soldiers to kill a Domain Force practitioner of the Kara clan.

At the time of the God and Devil War's, that was the most powerful human cavalry regiment.

100,000 men!.

To kill one man, a hundred thousand men sacrificed!

But now ... hmmph, hmmph.

Tiger could not help but look around at the men in the tent, men from the various kingdoms in the Roland Continent. These kingdom warriors basically were a mixed bag of good and bad soldiers. Don't talk about comparing with man's most powerful regiment during the time of the God and Devil Wars. These men would fall far short when compared with just the Sauron Kingdom's Royal Knights.

According to some people, today only the Temple's Holy Knights could maintain the standard of man's most powerful regiment that existed a thousand years ago in that war...

What about now? Where do I find 100,000 men to kill the Duke? Even if we send the entire Holy Knight Regiment to kill the Duke, we are sending 100,000 men to die... 100,000 Holy Knights? That's crazy!

"The Holy Knight Regiment had a total of 200,000 men. It is the Roland Continent's most powerful army. To sacrifice half of that just to kill one man. Then what about the rest of the war? And the Radiant Empire had another 4 elite armies, and the famous Lightning God's Whip!" As the men in the tent came to this realization their faces turned white.

The Holy Knight who said this coughed a little, then said in a low

voice, "General Tiger, don;t worry. I believe the Duke has not achieved Domain Force yet. In fact, Domain Force practitioners have not emerged for hundreds of years. It only existed in the legends, no one has actually seen one with his own eyes."

After a pause, he said softly, "Even then, if the Duke is really a Domain Force practitioner then in the war today the Lightning God's Whip would not have suffered so many losses. They successfully repelled our attacks but they lost quite a lot of soldiers too. Therefore, that Duke certainly cannot be a Domain Force practitioner!"

The other Holy Knight said, " Yes, General Tiger! I believe the Duke is not a Domain Force practitioner. He had only just reached the Sacred Swordsman level. Although he is powerful we just need to wait for our Paladin to arrive. We would then be able to defeat him. But ... "

"But what?" Tiger asked.

That Holy Knight said, "But he is a bit odd... His body is exceptionally strong. A Senior Holy Knight's attack would have no effect on him. I think he must have a strange technique to increase his body resilience..."

This Holy Knight stopped for a while, as though he was hesitating. But he eventually spoke, "General, everyone, are you familiar with the Temple's legendary tale? The God of War Achilles' Heels?"

"Legend of God of War Achilles' Heels?"

Everyone again became silent ...

"In the legendary God and Devil War, the God's clan's God of War, Achilles, was the most powerful god. He was strong and valiant. In the war against the Kara clan, he was unrivaled. The Kara Devil clan's most powerful experts were no match for him. Even Kara himself could not vanquish the God of War, Achilles.

The reason: Achilles had a weapons-proof body. It was said that when Achilles was born, the Mother Goddess took him by his legs and dipped him into the Holy Water of the Heavenly River. A body that had been soaked in the Holy Water would be extremely strong. His body was invulnerable to any worldly weapon.

Therefore, the God of War, Achilles, was the strongest amongst all the gods. But in the legends, Achilles was killed in the God and Devil War. It was because even though his body was impervious to harm, he had a weak point ... his leg! That's because, when the Mother Goddess grabbed his legs to dip him into the Holy Water, his legs were held by his mother and were not soaked in the Holy Water.

Therefore, the legs were that invincible God of War's only weak point!

In the final battle, Kara shot Achilles with an arrow that had been steeped in the dragon clan's poison... "

The men in the tent, of course, are familiar with this story. Tiger's eyes flashed. He said, "You are saying, this Duke...his body was soaked in...? Hmm... the Holy River's Holy Water is actually a legend about God. Then it cannot be the Holy Water... that soaked the Duke... Can it be a dragon's blood? It was in the legends that dipping in a dragon's blood would make one invincible!"

That Holy Knight somberly said, "Yes, a dragon's blood certainly would have this peculiar effect... But, dragon blood is not all empowering... at least, there must be a way to break a dragon's blood ... "

While these Roland men were discussing in the tent, in Thunder City, Rody took off his armor that was drenched with blood. His hair, his face was bloodied; sweat and tears were mixed together soaking his golden hair in sticky ropes that hang down his face.

Rody was calm and did not speak as he listened to Sieg's report of the army's losses. Even though a great loss was expected, the

strong Lightning God's Whip actually lost thousands of men, and if including the injured, then more than 10,000 men were lost.

The armored infantry guarding the city also lost almost 10,000 men. Of course, the enemy's losses were even more disastrous. According to some estimates, in the opponent's attack on the city, their infantry was a total loss. Apart from the loss of 20,000 to 30,000 men, the rest were crushed by the Lightning God's Whip in the assault. The opponent had thrown in two regiments and had lost at least 400,000 men.

Also, that Holy Knight Regiment, in their clash with the Lightning God's Whip, lost about 10,000 men. In comparison, the Empire's losses were very small.

He handed his armor to the guard and held his Dragon Fang Sword. He said, "The man I caught. Is he dead?"

"No."

"Good." Rody nodded his head. "I have a question for him!"

Chapter 176: Combined Sorcery

They were inside a sturdy room in the city.

The Holy Knight that Rody captured was stripped of his armor and was chained to a wooden stake. When Rody approached the Holy Knight, the Holy Knight glanced at his captor and then closed his eyes again angrily.

His right arm had already been hacked off by Rody. At the moment, his shoulder was wrapped and his wounds were treated by a magician. The man was sweating and a looked in pain but he did not even groan once.

Rody stood in front of the knight and looked coldly at the knight's injuries. The knight's eyes were still closed. After some time, not hearing any movement, he could not help but opened his eyes and then he saw the young man sizing him up coldly.

He knew that this man was the Duke of the Tulip Family. His entire presence exuded a powerful and imposing aura on the battlefield. His eyes were also like the eyes of a bloodthirsty beast.

"What is your name?" Rody finally asked coldly. He raised his chin and looked at the knight, his manner aloof and distant.

The knight gritted his teeth and glared fiercely at Rody. However, he did not speak.

"I have seen your sword and armor. I noticed that the hilt of your sword is made of silver. In other words, you must be one of the Silver Sword Knights. In that case, you could be one of the Senior Knights. Am I right?" Rody smiled coldly and then continued softly, "I am asking you again. What is your name?"

The knight's eyes revealed his anger but he remained silent.

Rody took a step forward and said, "What's wrong? Are you angry? What do you want? Do you plan to continue maintaining your ridiculous dignity? Do you plan to stay silent until your death

or perhaps spit on me?" Rody's eyes were cold and full of mockery. He also had an evil smile.

Sieg who was standing behind him was a bit surprised. When did the Duke become so fierce?

Rody continued, "I have some knowledge about the Knight's Spirit of the Roland continent. You have lost to me and became my captive. That means that right now, you are my slave! That is until your family redeemed you with money or something else! Unless you defeat me, you must respect me as a great knight. Am I right? Where is your Knight's Spirit? Could it be that you don't admit defeat? Or do you think I used some kind of insidious methods to defeat you?"

The Holy Knight finally said in a hoarse voice. "My name is Gerta. I am the Regiment Commander of the Third Regiment of the Holy Knights! I admit defeat and have no complaints. You are much stronger than me."

"Very good." Rody nodded and gave Sieg a meaningful glance. He wanted Sieg and the others to leave the room first.

Although they did not understand the Duke's intentions, everyone immediately followed their orders and left the prison cell.

"Alright. Knight Gerta." Only Rody and Gerta was left in the prison cell. He coldly looked at Gerta and said slowly, "I have something to ask you. I hope to be able to get an answer."

Gerta raised his eyebrows and replied, "I will not tell you anything! I am a proud knight! I will not submit to you!"

Rody laughed coldly and said, "Relax. I do not care about the Roland army and I am not interested in your military intelligence. However, you are a Holy Knight and is different from the army. As a high-rank knight of the temple, you should know the answers to my questions."

Gerta laughed and then ruthlessly said, "You want the secrets of our religion. That is out of the question!"

Rody shook his head and then he laughed. "Look. I will not make things difficult for you. In fact, on that battlefield, I could have easily killed you. I know your Knight's Spirit and beat you under fair conditions. After that, I captured you. You must submit to my command. Of course, this only applies to appropriate things. For example, I will not be able to force you to betray your family or faith. If I ask you for information about your army, you can refuse. However, if it is something else, you cannot refuse to give me an answer unless you have given up your Knight's Spirit. Have you already given up your Knight's Spirit?"

Gerta turned pale and shook his head. He then asked, "What do you wish to know?"

Rody nodded and slowly asked, "Does the Temple have a Black Veil Saint named Muse?"

When Rody mentioned the Black Veil Saint, Gerta looked surprised – together with some admiration. It was the same kind of expression that Rody saw the first time he entered the Duke's mansion, on the guards' faces when they see Nicol.

"Why are you asking about this?" Gerta's trance lasted for only a moment before he became vigilant again.

Rody shook his head and replied, "Right now, I am the one asking questions. You have no right to ask me anything! I believe answering this does not betray your faith?"

Gerta hesitated for a moment and gritted his teeth. "Yes. Muse is a person that we, the Knights, respect."

Rody nodded and then asked, "Where is Muse right now? Is she in the Sauron Kingdom or your Temple?"

Gerta shook his head and replied, "I don't know."

Rody looked at him for a moment and realized from his eyes he

was not lying.

Rody took a deep breath. His voice trembled but he still asked, "How is she? I heard that she was punished by the Temple for opposing the crusade."

When Gerta heard Rody said 'she' instead of 'he', he looked surprised and said, "You... You know Her Excellency's gender?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "You forgot again. I am the one asking the questions here. You are not qualified to ask me anything!"

Gerta gave a vigilant gaze and said, "I cannot answer that question... Why..." Gerta was about to ask another question before remembering he was not supposed to and then said, "This is our Temple affairs. I cannot leak any information."

Rody smiled, "I am acquainted with Muse. I met her in the Northwest Region and fought a fair duel against her. I respect her very much. So when I heard she got into trouble, I wanted to know more."

Gerta hesitated and finally said, "I don't know... However, just before we left I met her together with an elder of the Temple. At that time, she did not seem to have any problem."

Rody sighed. Now that he knew Muse was alright, he felt relieved. For all he knew, religious people were all crazy people that liked to burn people at the stake.

"Good. Thank you for being honest." Rody nodded. After that, he looked at Gerta coldly and asked, "Then, the next question. The Roland continent had always been defending passively. Why did you suddenly form a coalition to invade us?"

Before Gerta could speak, Rody added, "I heard that your Temple received instructions from God. What really happened? What makes you think you could defeat us?"

Gerta immediately said, "I cannot answer this question! This

involves my faith! I cannot betray my faith! I refuse to answer!"

Rody laughed coldly and said, "You refuse to answer? Do you think I cannot find a way to make you talk?"

Gerta immediately became angry and said, "You cannot force me to betray my faith even if I am your prisoner! That... That is not the way of the Knight's Spirit!"

Rody looked at him lightly and replied, "You fool. What Knight's Spirit? This is the Radiant Continent and I am not a knight!"

Gerta's face was red and the anger in his eyes grew stronger. Rody looked coldly at him and said, "Do you want to call me shameless and despicable? Right now, it is you who attacked us. Do you think invaders like you have the right to talk badly about me?"

Rody no longer looked at him and walked out of the prison cell. Sieg was standing outside the cell and saw Rody walk out. He then immediately said, "Duke..."

Rody shook his head and looked at the nearby soldiers before saying, "Think of a way to make him talk! However, do not kill him!"

Sieg frowned, "Your Excellency. He looks like a Senior Knight. These kinds of people are tough and stubborn. I don't think..."

Rody understood and nodded his head. "Hm. That sounds reasonable... I don't think torturing this person would work..." Rody pondered for a moment and then he suddenly sneered, "There is no need to torture him. Let someone accompany him at all times of the day and provide him with food and drinks. Do not torture him at all. However, do not let him sleep, not even for a moment. Even if he wants to sleep, do whatever is needed to keep him awake."

"Huh?" Sieg froze up. He had never heard of this before. He had heard of not giving the prisoner food or water or other types of torture. However, it was the first time he heard about not letting a

prisoner sleep.

Rody smiled and said, "I learned this method [from An...](#) an old friend before the expedition. I don't even know whether it would be effective or not. Let's just try it first."

Seeing Sieg's hesitant look, Rody frowned and said, "Is it really that difficult? You just need to splash his face with water or maybe make a lot of noise near his ears. No matter what, do not let him sleep at all. Let's see how long he can last."

Their subordinates immediately started to carry out the orders. As Rody and Sieg left, Sieg seemed to hesitate as he walked beside Rody. Finally, he could not help but speak. "Your Excellency."

"Yes?"

Sieg gritted his teeth and replied, "Your Excellency, I think that your methods are strange... If I may speak bluntly, you never tortured prisoners in the past."

Rody stopped and looked at Sieg. Sieg believed that the Duke would have been angry but he still raised his head and looked into the Duke's eyes.

Rody nodded and said, "Sieg. I know that you do not think highly of these actions. In your opinion, torturing a prisoner could even be considered despicable. Am I right?"

Sieg looked at Rody's sharp eyes and started to have a cold sweat. However, he stubbornly replied, "Yes."

Rody quietly looked at Sieg for a few seconds and then sighed. He then turned around and looked at the sky.

At that moment, it was already night time. After a day of fighting, the soldiers in Thunder City took this opportunity to rest. There were only a few soldiers patrolling the walls nervously. A tense quiet surrounded the city.

"Sieg. Let me ask you. What is our mission?" Rody looked at the

stars in the sky and asked Sieg in a soft voice. "Why do we fight?"

Sieg thought a little then replied loudly, "Obviously, it is to destroy our enemies and drive them out of our continent."

Rody nodded and sighed, "That is what you see and think. However, I am different. Sieg. I am thinking of something more than that."

Rody patted Sieg's shoulder slowly. This felt a little awkward as he was younger than Sieg. However, Sieg did not feel anything but instead felt it was natural. Over time, he had forgotten that the Duke was much younger than himself. He felt like he was following the late Duke. The late Duke had also patted his shoulders and instructed him.

Rody's voice sounded in his ears. "I am a Supreme Commander. My task is not only to drive away our enemies. I am also responsible for the lives of the soldiers! When fighting against the enemy, I have to find ways to reduce the losses of our army. If I gave the wrong order or took a wrong step, it is possible for thousands of people to die!"

Sieg did not speak and quietly listened to Rody.

"Maybe you think that torturing a defenseless prisoner is dishonorable. However, you are wrong! If you torture him, you may be able to obtain important information. If this information can help prevent our armies from experiencing a major loss, I would think that this is the right thing to do!"

Rody's voice turned serious and he continued, "Perhaps your words are sensible. As a warrior, there is no dignity in torturing a defenseless prisoner. However, you are not just a warrior! You are a commander! The lives of many soldiers are in your hands! Your most important duty is not upholding your dignity as a warrior but protecting the lives of these people."

"Do you think that my actions are dishonorable? In that case, let

me tell you this. As long as I can avoid losing my soldiers, as long as more of my soldiers can live, I would do even more dastardly deeds in future!"

Rody spoke with an indifferent and ruthless expression. Sieg looked at the Duke and remembered his naïve smile when he had just entered the barracks. He also remembered the execution of the villagers in the Northwest. This gave birth to a strange emotion in him.

"Your Excellency," Sieg looked at Rody respectfully and said, "You have really changed."

Rody smiled faintly and replied, "After witnessing so many people around me die, how could I not change?"

After that, Rody waved his hands as if he wanted to end that depressing conversation. He then looked at Sieg and changed the topic. "Today, the sorcery used by the Roland army's sorcerers is a bit strange. What do you think?"

Sieg nodded and replied, "Yes. It is reasonable to say that our magicians are not weaker than their sorcerers. However, the spells used by our hundreds of magicians were not so powerful. I have never even heard of such concentrated lightning."

Rody nodded and said, "That is right. Although sorcerers can use large scale magic spells for attack or defense, there is something different here. Those sorcerers are merely low ranked sorcerers. Even if all of them used lightning spells at the same time, it would not have been so powerful. A hundred plus small lightning bolts could not have broken our magician's barriers. However, the spell they used today easily did that."

Sieg suddenly said, "I think this lightning spell was as powerful as the ones used by a high ranked sorcerer. No, perhaps it is even more powerful! Even the legendary forbidden spells are..."

Rody shook his head and said, "I have seen and personally

experienced forbidden spells in the Northwest. It was when I fought against their Black Veil Saint. However, it was not as powerful as the spell used today."

Sieg's complexion turned somber as he said, "Are you saying that the people of the Roland continent had found a way for a lot of sorcerers to use the spell simultaneously, and thus made the spell several times more powerful?"

Rody thought for a moment and suddenly asked, "Sieg. How hard must an ordinary person punch if he wants to knock down a robust young man?"

Sieg froze for a moment and answered. "This? I am not too sure. However, if I want to knock down a robust man, my punch would need about one hundred pounds worth of effort."

Rody nodded and said, "That's right. So, let us say that this robust man is fighting against a group of children. Each of the children was very weak and would not be able to harm the robust man. Even if they took turns to punch the robust man, they would not be able to hurt him. However, if the children combined their strength into one punch, they might be able to knock him down."

Andy

Chapter 177: Combined Technique

Outside the Imperial Palace of the Empire, a group of golden armored guards was standing and waiting with axes in their hands. That was because the Emperor had given the order not to allow anyone in and disturb him.

At that moment, Andy looked serious. He could see the entire situation at Thunder City through Rody's mask. Naturally, he knew about the powerful lightning spell cast by hundreds of Roland sorcerers.

"Is it combination of sorcery?" In a serious manner, Andy asked Sky who was standing beside him. "Did you say that they are using a combination of sorcery?"

Sky nodded and then shook his head and frowned, "Old skeleton, I only heard you describe it but I have never seen it for myself. However, according to your description, it should be the legendary combination of sorcery. It was a legendary spell that allowed the sorcerers to combine their magical powers. For example, it is impossible to break a wall with the punches of a hundred soldiers. However, if the powers of those hundred punches were to be concentrated into one punch, it would become possible!"

"I understand what you mean..." Andy furrowed his eyebrows. "However, doesn't the combination of sorcery only exist in legends? I heard that it was the sorcerer's strongest technique during the God and Devil war. It was also the legendary strongest sorcery..."

Sky pursed his lips and said, "You are wrong, The combination of sorcery emerged during the war with the Mystic Dragon... As men were God's people, they were natural enemies with the Mystic Dragon. During that era, human sorcerers learned how to use the combination of sorcery from God. However, this technique was lost after thousands of years."

Andy stood up and then slowly sat back again and laughed. "This sounds like trouble... Hundreds of their ordinary sorcerers are already so powerful. If there were a few high ranked sorcerers or a few saints from the Temple, using forbidden spells together...that scene, I dare not imagine."

Sky pursed his lips and replied, "I have never heard of such powerful sorcery. If it were used, I am afraid that the sky would also collapse. Even people who practice 'Domain Force' may not be able to resist. I know that, during the legendary demonic era, a Kara clansman with 'Domain Force' was killed by this combination of sorcery."

Andy became supercilious and said, "Looks like you people with 'Domain Force' are not omnipotent. A few sorcerers are enough to kill you?"

Sky replied, "According to what you say of the Saints from the Temple, their strengths are about the same as Sacred Swordsmen and Holy Knights. However, when encountering a person with 'Domain Force', under normal situation, even several Sacred Swordsmen and Saints may also not be able to defeat a person with 'Domain Force'. This is a high-level strength that a difference in numbers cannot overcome. However, if a few Saints were to use combination of sorcery, even a person with 'Domain Force' may also not be able to withstand the attack. Besides that, what do you even think people with 'Domain Force' are? However powerful we are, we are still humans. We are not Gods! If the opponents are willing to suffer losses and send out hundreds of thousands of Sacred Swordsmen, then they are able to have a fair fight with a person practicing 'Domain Force'. The strength of people with 'Domain Force' is not inexhaustible; surely there will be a time when they can be depleted..."

Andy nodded and said, "No wonder the people from the Roland continent suddenly become so brave and dared to invade us! Originally, they should have been very thankful that the Radiant

Empire did not intend to fight them. However, now they dared attack us in our land! Hum, is the combination of sorcery really so powerful?"

Having said that, Andy glanced at Sky. Sky immediately jumped up and shouted, "Don't try to take advantage of me! I am not a fool! If it were really combination of sorcery, they would just need a few Saints to kill me. Don't you even think about it!"

Andy sighed and said, "Is your life so valuable? You are already a few hundred years old and yet you are still afraid of death? However, this is really a headache... Their high ranked sorcerers have not even appeared. What are they waiting for? How did they suddenly learn combination of sorcery, when this technique had been lost for so many years? Don't tell me, some shitty God taught them?"

Sky rolled his eyeballs and said, "Actually, the combination of sorcery may be terrifying but it is not the only terrifying spell. There are other methods that can be used to compete with it. For example, the magician's combined technique. The combined technique and the combination of sorcery have similar principles. If the two methods were used against each other, it is still not clear which would win. This combined technique, like combination of sorcery, had also been lost for thousands of years and only existed in legend."

Andy sighed and asked, "So what should we do? Should we go to the Church and pray; God, please come quickly and teach us this combined technique!"

Andy suddenly jumped up. He had a strange expression. His eyes looked surprised and vigilant.

"Fatty, that day in the Imperial Palace, the Pope used the God's Vanquish. I did not see it myself but you did. The God's Vanquish should be a kind of combined technique. Am I right?"

Sky closed his eyes to recall the spell used by the Pope that day.

Without doubt, there were several Bishop Elders that had transferred their magical power to the Pope.

"Possibly..." Sky's expression changed. "Now that you mention it, I think you are right... After all, combined technique and combination of sorcery were in the legends. I have never seen any of these spells before but after listening to you, it seemed like..."

"Haha haha..." Andy could not help but laugh. "Then, this is interesting. Combined technique and combination of sorcery; the two God's religions fighting each other. Haha haha..."

Sky frowned and asked, "Old skeleton, don't you think it strange? Why did humans suddenly master the strongest legendary sorcery and the strongest legendary magic? Is it the interference of those guys in heaven? At the end of the day, humans, regardless whether they are from Roland continent or Radiant continent, both worship the same guys in heaven. He gave the northern Roland continent the combination of sorcery and taught the Radiant continent the combined technique... then watch the two fight each other. Is this fun?"

Andy shrugged and replied, "Who knows? Maybe those guys in heaven are crazy..."

Sky frowned. "If there were really such combined technique, it would not be difficult to put down the cavalry of northwest grassland and even the powerful Reuenthal."

Andy hmphed at Sky and then said, "Would that Pope consent? Even if he has the combined technique, he will not tell us. He will also not send more people to help us. The problem in the Northwest is necessary for him to keep the Empire's influence in check. That old guy cannot wait for the Church to rule the Empire. Why would he help us to put down the Northwest? He might help the people from the North but I think we should handle the situation at the Northwest ourselves. If that doesn't work, fatty, you can go and deal with it. Otherwise, it would be a waste for

someone, with 'Domain Force' like you to just sit here the entire day?"

Sky looked at Andy and coldly said, "You want me to go to the Northwest? What is going to happen to you when I go to the Northwest? Old skeleton, others may not know but I can see your weakness! The Emperor's body had already consumed a lot of your spiritual power, right? How long can you continue to support yourself? If someone decides to attack you, will you be able to fight back? You are a skeleton and your magic power will not replenish! Moreover, the Church is still puzzled that the Emperor had suddenly recovered. There is also the vampires, who may come looking for you because you have suppressed Prince Barond. They just need to send a few masters to attack you. Even if they cannot kill you, they can still exhaust your spiritual power and then you will be finished. I am here, by your side, to accompany you and to protect you! When there is nothing going on, I can help you to replenish your strength. If I were to leave, what is going to happen to you?"

Andy no longer laughed. He silently and calmly looked at Sky for a while before he said, "Fatty, both of us have lived for hundreds of years. However, if I do not experience a few interesting things in my life, then what would be the purpose of living? I have already spent two hundred years sleeping but the whole of last year was the most exciting."

Sky sighed and replied, "You are really good to that boy... You risk being exterminated just to help him... However, I cannot leave you. I do not have many friends. You and that boy are my only friends. That boy had already bathed in the blood of the Mystic Dragon and will not die so easily. I only need to look after you. I do not care about other people, or the Empire or the Northwest Region."

...

Outside the Imperial Capital, a carriage rushed towards the

direction of the city gate. The person driving the carriage was a robust middle-aged man. The beard on his face made him look unusually valiant. He carried an odd-looking longbow on his back and a flexible whip in his hand. He gently flicked his wrist and the whip stretched out into the air, making a crisp sound. Behind the carriage was a group of the Empire's garrison cavalry. It was led by a robust young man. He had a heroic expression but his left arm was wrapped with an armband. He went to the side of the carriage and loudly said, "Miss Myka. We have reached the Imperial Capital."

The window of the carriage opened. However, the person that revealed her face was not Myka. Instead, it was Diane.

Diane looked at the young officer and laughed. "Mr. Oliseh, you must be very excited. Once you enter the Imperial Capital, you can join the Lightning God's Whip."

The young officer, Oliseh, showed excitement in his eyes. However, he remembered something and his eyes turned gloomy. He then said, "It will be an honor to risk my life for His Excellency the Duke. My late father will also be proud."

Darke who was driving the carriage was about to speak. However, before he could turn his body, Diane glared at him and shouted, "Hunter, you better hurry up! If it were not because of you, we would have reached the Imperial Capital a long time ago!"

Darke trembled and forced a smile. However, he still turned to look at Diane. He looked at her tenderly before silently swinging his whip again.

Oliseh laughed bitterly and said, "Miss Diane, Darke has already been driving the carriage for two full days. I suggest we let one of my men replace him."

These words made the dozen cavalymen behind them excited. These young soldiers had been following Myka and Diane for days and had admired their beauty. To drive the carriage for these

goddesses would be a heavenly task.

Diane looked at Darke's back and lightly said, "No need. That guy is nothing special but he is talented in driving carriages."

Oliseh gave a wry smile as he looked at Darke with a complicated and sympathetic expression.

Oliseh was Allier's son. He was originally the captain of the local garrison. When his father was killed in battle, Rody had promised to recruit Oliseh into the Lightning God's Whip. Rody then entrusted the entire matter to his subordinates.

At that time, Sky was curious and was in a hurry to get to the Imperial Capital to join in the fun. However, Darke's injuries had not healed. As a result, Myka and Diane were left behind to take care of Darke, while Sky left first for the Imperial Capital.

With the Duke's orders, Oliseh's transfer was quick and simple. He then followed Myka and Diane to the Imperial Capital. Although he was late by many days, when finally he saw the Imperial Capital looming in the distance, he was excited.

Oliseh also had different thoughts in his mind.

When he first saw Myka and Diane, he was shocked by their beauty. Listening to them talk, he knew that Myka was the woman of His Excellency the Duke. Naturally, he did not dare to have any ulterior motives. However, being young, he ended up falling in love with Diane at first sight. Although his father had just died and he had no mood in pursuing girls, the love in his heart grew stronger every day.

Diane was pleasant to everyone except Darke. She was fierce and harsh to Darke. Originally, it was because she was angry that Darke had delayed their trip. In the end, she found fault with Darke every day as it was fun.

The journey had been fun. Oliseh secretly admired Diane while Diane continued to bully Darke for fun. Meanwhile, Myka felt

anxious. She heard that Rody went to the North to fight a war and was worried for her sweetheart.

On the other hand, Diane was very confident. She had seen Rody use the Mystic Dragon Purge in the valley to kill Wuya. Naturally, Diane had great confidence in Rody's strength and was not worried at all. Along the way, she comforted Myka. "That guy has a lot of luck. Now he even has terrifying strength. I don't think there is anybody else, besides Sky, who could kill him." However, Myka still looked melancholic every day. The only time she laughed was when she looked at how Diane bullied Darke.

Diane noticed that the girls around Rody were very intimate with him. Even though Myka was a prostitute, she had a certain quality that made Diane feel inferior. Besides this, that day Myka had declared: "I will be his concubine". That bold declaration of love made Diane gasp in surprise. She was extremely sure that she would not have that kind of determination.

On top of that, she already knew that Rody was madly in love with the daughter of the Tulip Family. He was even willing to risk his life for Nicole. This kind of affection would be extremely difficult to replace.

Although, in the beginning when she was by Rody's side she had an inexplicable feeling, as things gradually developed these feelings disappeared...

On reaching the city gate, Oliseh entered the Imperial Capital and was transferred straight to the barracks of the Lightning God's Whip. At that time, Myka started to worry.

Where should I go? Nobody knew where that fatty went the moment he reached the Imperial Capital. There was no news of him ever since they departed.

Rody went to the North. So where should I go? Should I go to the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family? Should I go and see Miss Nicole like this? When I meet her, am I supposed to just say that I

am Rody's...

Myka became dejected again. Diane noticed and asked her, "What's wrong with you?"

Myka sighed and said, "This whole time, I have been thinking of quickly reaching the Imperial Capital. Now that I have reached the Imperial Capital, I do not know what to do."

Diane shook her head and said, "Obviously the first thing we should do is find that fatty. Who knows where that guy went."

Myka lowered her head and thought for a while. She then looked up and suddenly smiled. "I have decided."

"What?"

Myka lightly said, "At first, I wanted to go straight to the North and find him. However, after some thoughts and since he is now fighting a war, if I were to go there, I would only be a burden to him. Since I want to be his woman, I cannot become his burden and give him more trouble. So..."

Myka smiled peacefully. Her voice was firm and left no room for doubt. "So I decided to stay in the Imperial Capital. I will find a place to stay and wait for him to return!"

"Wait? How long will you wait?" Diane frowned.

Myka smiled faintly. Her tone sounded as if everything was very simple. "Regardless of how long it will be, I will wait!"

Diane was stunned as she looked at Myka for a long time before she sighed and said, "You are really strange..."

Myka shook her head and lightly replied, "There is nothing strange about it. When you have finally decided to give yourself to a man, the world becomes that simple!"

Chapter 178: The Paladin's Challenge

On the morning of the third day of the war outside Thunder City, the soldiers on the wall of Thunder City saw a strange scene.

A white horse galloped towards the city wall, from afar. A knight in an old and black armor was on the horse. The armor looked like it had been used for many years. The knight did not wear his helmet. His brown hair fluttered in the wind. As the knight gradually approached, his facial features became clearer. He looked like he was about forty years old. His [facial hair](#) was thick, making it hard to see his face.

The knight rode the horse and stopped about a hundred paces from the city wall. The knight dismounted, holding a sword. The sword also looked like it had been used for many years. Even the leather scabbard had lost its color from aging.

The knight stood by his horse and shouted towards the city wall, "I am Knight Fielding from the Roland Temple! I request to speak to the Duke of the Tulip Family!"

His voice transmitted very clearly from a hundred paces away from the wall. Although he had not shouted, all the soldiers on the wall could hear him clearly. Besides that, the voice actually transmitted through the wall and into the city.

At that moment, Rody was patrolling inside the wall. He quickly went up the wall when he suddenly heard that voice coming from outside.

Sieg looked at the Roland knight below the wall, and shouted, "Who are you?"

The knight raised his sword high and repeated, "I am Knight Fielding of the Roland Temple! I request to speak to the Duke of the Tulip Family!"

Rody frowned and shouted, "I am the Duke of the Tulip Family.

Knight Fielding, what is the matter? If you came here to ask us to surrender, then my soldiers will start shooting arrows!"

Knight Fielding smiled faintly. "Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, I did not come here to persuade you to surrender! I am a knight of the Holy Knight Regiment. I heard that you have captured one of us. As a knight, I respectfully challenge Your Excellency to a battle! That person is my subordinate. If I defeat you in battle, I want him released."

Before Rody could speak, Sieg had already shouted, "The Roland man below, who are you to challenge our Duke?"

Fielding lightly said, "In the name of a knight, I am challenging Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family! If he does not dare to accept the challenge, please release my comrade!"

Sieg sneered, "Nonsense! What do you mean by in the name of a knight? Your Roland army has hundreds of thousands of knights. If each one of you just come here and challenges Our Excellency the Duke, then he would not have time to eat or sleep!"

Those words made all the Empire soldiers on the wall laugh. Some of them even pointed at Knight Fielding and loudly cursed at him.

Knight Fielding's expression remained the same. One could not tell whether he was angry or embarrassed. Instead, he still spoke in his calm tone, "Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, I am Fielding, a [Paladin](#) from the Temple of the Roland Continent! Am I really not qualified to challenge you?"

Paladin?

Those words were very clear even though the people on the wall were still cursing and noisy.

When he said he was a Paladin, the derisive laughter immediately stopped.

A Paladin was the best among the masters of the Roland

Continent; the best of the knights.

When Fielding realized that the noise on the wall had quietened down, he sneered, "Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, do you dare accept my challenge? The two of us will fight down here below the wall. I wonder whether the bravest and the most renowned person on the Radiant Continent, dare accept my challenge?"

"Be quiet!"

Involuntarily, all the Empire soldiers on the wall turned to look at their hero, the great and handsome Duke of the Tulip Family.

It was already ingrained in the hearts of the soldiers that their Duke of the Tulip Family was a fierce and brave man. That was even more so for those who had witnessed the Duke leading his Lightning God's Whip to charge and fight their enemy on the battlefield. They admired their commander from the bottom of their hearts. They worshiped him as the God of the Battlefield.

Sieg, who was after all more experienced, could not help but whisper, "Your Excellency the Duke, that person claimed to be a Paladin. You are the commander of an army and you do not need to care about them. If they have the ability, they should just start a siege. A personal duel between the two of you holds no meaning. Besides that, your opponent is a Paladin. Even if you manage to defeat him, there is a chance that you might be injured. You are our Supreme Commander and you have a big responsibility."

Rody understood Sieg's reasoning. After all, Rody was then a Supreme Commander. A Paladin was also qualified enough to challenge him but could he defeat a Paladin?

A Paladin of the Roland Continent was equivalent to the Sacred Swordsman from the Radiant Continent. Even if he could defeat that Paladin, Rody knew he would definitely get injured. Moreover, the outcome was not certain.

Of course, if he were to win, it would be better. However, it would not be good to get injured especially since he still needed to fight a war and there were many more thing he needed to do. If he were to lose, the morale of the army would also drop.

It was not advisable to take such a risk.

Rody was silent when Knight Fielding spoke again.

"Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, I was not here during the battle the day before yesterday. I heard that you were extremely valiant on the battlefield and it piqued my interest. At the Roland Continent, Miss Muse of the Temple talked about your valor. I am very fascinated by such rumor. Now you have also captured one of my comrades. So, I, as a Paladin of the Roland Continent, challenge you! I know you are the commander of the Lightning God's Whip. Even though you might be doubtful of my identity, regardless whether you win or lose, I will order the Holy Knights of the Roland Continent not to interfere in this battle. Is this condition fair?"

Rody gritted his teeth. Seeing the surrounding soldiers looking at him, in anticipation and admiration, he felt excited. Besides that, the other party had just promised to temporarily withdraw the Holy Knights from battle. That could be considered fair.

The soldiers beside him could not help but started to clamor. They scolded Fielding, who was below the city wall, for being arrogant, for rating himself too highly and for being suicidal.

Sieg, who was still by Rody's side, whispered, "Your Excellency. You don't need to care about him. Just order the soldiers to shoot some arrows and chase him away. These days, we need you for a lot of things. We will also need you to strategize."

Rody sighed. He reluctantly suppressed his impulse and was about to refuse...

Fielding then sneered from below the city wall. "Your Excellency

Duke of the Tulip Family, Are you really afraid to accept the challenge? You dare not accept the challenge from a warrior? Is your bravery just a rumor? It looks like my fiancée, Miss Muse, is wrong."

In the Imperial Palace, Andy's eyes were closed as he 'watched' the scene at Thunder City. His expression changed when he heard the knight's last few words.

"This is bad. Whatever it is, that boy has to fight now!"

The words 'fiancée' was like a great blow to Rody's heart. His intention to kill grew stronger and his eyes turned cold.

Rody had just suppressed his impulsive intentions but now his impulse had turned to anger.

Fiancee?

Fiancee!

Fiancee?

Rody then squeezed out the next few words from his throat, "What did you say?"

Fielding laughed and replied, "I just said that, when I was in Roland Continent, my fiancée Miss Muse had mentioned of your bravery many times. However, I did not expect you to be afraid of accepting a challenge from a warrior!"

"Prepare the horse!" Before Fielding had finished speaking, Rody shouted, turned around and walked towards the wall, behind him.

"You Excellency the Duke..." Sieg followed closely behind Rody and still wanted to discourage him. Rody glared at Sieg. "I said, prepare the horse!"

Sieg saw Rody's glare and trembled. He immediately became alerted. Rody's eyes were sharp and his look was like a knife stabbing into a person's body. His eyes were so cold that Sieg could not help but step back and subconsciously swallowed all that he

wanted to say.

Rody stormed down the wall feeling extremely angry. It felt like his blood was boiling... Fiancee?

Rody's hands trembled as he tightly held the Dragon Fang Sword. His aura became more and more violent with every step he took. Finally, he reached the bottom of the wall and mounted his horse, Garros. He looked at the gate slowly opening in front of him.

On both sides, the soldiers looked at their great commander with respect. They moved aside to create a path.

Although Fielding had a smile on his face, his eyes were cold. He watched the gate open and the Duke of the Tulip Family cantered out in a black horse.

Fielding smiled and jumped on his horse. Instead of going up to Rody, he shouted, "This place is too close to your city wall. Since this is a fair duel, I request we fight in the middle of the battlefield!"

Having said that, he turned his horse around and started to move back.

Rody followed him closely, from behind. The two men on their horses trotted to the middle of the battlefield. When the distance from the city wall and the distance from the barracks of the Roland coalition forces were about equal, Rody coldly said, "Is this far enough?"

Feeling the sharp glare, Fielding could not help but frown and coldly replied, "Fine! Let us fight here!"

Rody slowly picked up a spear from the horse and looked at Fielding. He asked coldly, "Did you say Mouse is your fiancée?"

"Mouse..." Fielding lightly muttered and then he said, "It seems like she really thinks highly of you to even tell you her real name... Yes, Mouse is indeed my fiancée. I believe this is what you are currently most concerned about. If it was not because of this, I

believe you might not have accepted my challenge."

Rody gloomily gritted his teeth and replied, "Yes, did you deliberately use this to provoke me, to get me out?"

Fielding said bravely, "I am a Paladin of the Temple! Mouse is my fiancée. However, when she returned from the grasslands, she started to ignore me. Because of you, she also opposed the crusade and angered the Elders of the Temple. If it was not because of me, she would have been executed long ago! I found out that she got acquainted with you as she occasionally spoke of you! Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, as a knight and as a man, I challenge you! I will prove to Mouse who is the real hero!"

At the moment, Rody could not understand his own emotions. After such a long experience, he was also aware of his subtle feelings for the Black Veil Saint. If there was another woman in this world other than Nicole that Rody would care about, then that person would definitely be Mouse from the Roland Continent.

Rody's heart ached when he recalled the day Mouse parted with him in the wilderness of the Northwest Region. They had waved to each other from their horses and then she said, "If you do not forget me, I will not forget you!" Subconsciously, Rody asked, "How is she?"

Fielding coldly replied, "She is not good! Duke of the Tulip Family, Mouse is the holiest girl in the Temple! She is the favorite goddess of the Holy Knights! She is my fiancée! However, because of you, she was arrested by the Elders for being disloyal to her faith!"

Rody gritted his teeth and slowly said, "So, do you want to kill me, because of Mouse?"

Fielding lightly said, "Yes, Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, whatever it is, I must kill you! This is not only for my Temple, my faith but also for my love! Before she went to the grasslands, she promised to marry me! However, when she

returned, everything changed! I have seen her cry several times at the corner of the Temple. Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, This is all your fault! You used a devilish trick to steal her heart!"

Having said that, Fielding then took up his spear and shouted. "Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, pick up your spear! Let us duel! As long as you can kill me, Mouse is yours!"

Rody coldly looked at the Paladin of the Roland Continent. He then spoke in a low voice, "You are wrong! It does not matter if I kill you or not. Mouse is still mine!"

Huxu 胡须 can mean mustache, beard or even whiskers.

神圣骑士 Shensheng qishi for Holy Knights and 圣骑士 sheng qishi for Paladin. These two Chinese names are similar, causing the confusion. 剑圣武士 Jiansheng wushi is Sacred Swordsman. Paladin can also mean Holy Knight but it would fit an individual more, compared to Holy Knights which sounds better on groups. I apologize for the earlier chapter when Muse described Holy Knights as the equivalent to Sacred Swordsman.

Chapter 179: Dragon Break

The sky was awash in green, spotted here and there with clouds. The sky, green; the clouds, white; the sand, yellow; the ocean, blue. But the sky then started to get darker and darker like it was going to rain, seemingly putting pressure on the two men.

On the battlefield, the two men rode on their respective horses. They both slowly moved outwards. After reaching a certain distance away from each other, they both raised their spears.

There were no cries, no clamor nor horns. The two men then started to charge at each other on their horses.

They were like two black clouds as they charged at the same time. The black and white figures clashed violently in the wilderness.

There was an earth-shattering noise as both spears fiercely clashed against each other. After that clashing sound, both spears broke.

The two masses of golden fighting energies fiercely entangled together. Rody had already thrown away his broken spear. He took out his Dragon Fang Sword and ruthlessly slashed at Fielding. Fielding had also drawn his sword. Both weapons were wrapped in the brilliance of their golden fighting energies. Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! A series of clashing sounds followed as the weapons struck each other.

Both horses had galloped so fast they had even kicked up a lot of dust. The tremendous charge had forced both men to pull back a little. The horses, stressed by the sudden change neighed and puffed out hot air through their mouths and noses.

The two fighters immediately jumped off their horses. The moment Rody's feet touched the ground, he immediately brandished his sword.

Fielding changed to holding his sword with his two hands. A golden fighting energy, similar to Rody's, burst out from his body. The two golden balls of light continued to collide with each other... once, twice, three times...

The violent strikes created a violent atmosphere. The collisions between the two caused wave upon wave of energies throwing up and scattering the rocks and the sand.

One was a Paladin while the other was a Sacred Swordsman. Both of them had reached the highest level in terms of swordplay. Their golden fighting energies have already reached the peak. From afar, it looked like there were three suns. One in the sky and two more on the ground.

Finally, there was a loud bang as the two swords fiercely clashed together. Both parties looked as if they were supporting each other before they both withdrew again. The ground right where they collided had cracked!

Rody took a deep breath and sent out another series of slashes. Several huge blades of light made whistling sounds as they shot out towards Fielding.

Fielding's eyes flashed. With a grunt, he swung his sword in an arc. A circular curtain of light rose. In the dazzling light, Fielding continued to stand still but his expression became even more serious. The fighting energy emitting from his body also rose sharply.

As the dust gradually settled down, Fielding could be seen standing inside a large crater. He sneered and charged towards Rody. The two once again collided fiercely against each other. However, Fielding suddenly stretched out his other hand, his palm opened and facing Rody's chest. Rody immediately felt his opponent shoot out a beam of golden light from the palm, hitting him in his chest. Without even having the chance to groan, Rody flew out about a dozen meters away before crashing into the

ground.

Rody's chest armor had broken revealing his muscles. Rody shook his head, patted the dust off his body and then stood up.

"Really tough..." Fielding lightly said, "Looks like what Tiger said is true. You are really powerful and ferocious. Did you smear your body with dragon blood?"

As Fielding talked, he again rushed forward with his sword. It was as if he was crazy and the cross-sword he held shot out beams of light. These beams fell down like the pouring rain. For a time, there were flashes of bright light and echoes of scary vibrations on the battlefield.

In a single breath, Rody deflected more than ten slashes from his opponent while also retreating about ten steps. Although Rody had reached the rank of a Sacred Swordsman and had about the same strength as Fielding, his enemy was much older and more experienced than him. Fielding was at the peak level for warriors. It was the moment when the warrior's strength, experience, and speed were at their peaks. As a result, after the latest bout of intense fighting, even more sword marks appeared on Rody's body.

Rody could no longer bear it anymore when he saw that there were a few more deep cracks on his armor. He angrily shouted, "You are not the only one who can go crazy."

With a loud roar, he ruthlessly slashed at Fielding with all his strength. That forced Fielding to move a few steps. After that, Rody brandished his sword, sending a series of light at Fielding. Fielding was too close and was unable to use his light screen defense. He could only hurriedly block the attacks with his sword. Fielding managed to block the blades of light, from his left and right, as the balls of light bounced off. Fielding then shouted, "Fool! Is this your only trick? Is your swordsmanship just this?"

Fielding then made a strange gesture with his sword. A golden radiance burst out from the tip of the sword. That golden radiance

formed a spiral cone before fiercely shooting towards Rody.

Rody immediately stepped back and tightly held the sword with his hand. He also used his other hand to hold the blade horizontally to block the attack.

There was a muffled sound as Rody felt his body being torn apart by the spiral. His body involuntarily slipped backward as his feet were dragged on the ground, leaving behind a deep gouge mark.

When Rody finally stopped, his entire upper armor had broken. Countless cracks revealed the violent power of that spiral.

Rody grunted coldly. He used his left hand to pull the metal armor away from his body. His hand was covered with golden fighting energy when he pulled the armor. Hence, the armor broke into numerous fragments and was scattered away. Rody's strong muscles on his upper body were completely exposed. However, his body did not show a single scar.

Fielding sneered and said, "Your body is really tough, but your swordsmanship is terrible. It does not match your strong body. Maybe you only know how to use those blades of light?"

Rody looked at him coldly and then he took a deep breath. Suddenly, the golden fighting energy in his body rose sharply like a huge flame. From afar, Rody's eyes looked as if it was gold in color. Rody then coldly said, "You talk too much. Are you fighting or not?"

From a distance, on the city wall of Thunder City, Sieg was feeling jumpy as he watched. He saw the two golden figures colliding again and again. He could feel the fierce quake from the top of the wall. Waves of energy caused the sand to fly as if they were covering up the colors of the sky.

Both of them were exceptionally tough. Their first swing had created a deep hole in the ground. The ground where the two of them fought was already badly fissured. Sieg was shocked as he

watched the series of clashes and could not help but give the order, "Cavalry, get ready."

Sieg had made up his mind. If His Excellency the Duke had any mishap, he would give the order to rush out and bring back His Excellency the Duke, no matter how many lives he had to sacrifice. He looked back and saw Milo, but he did not know when he had arrived at the city. His face was somber as Milo looked at the two masses of golden light clashing, from time to time, in the distance. It was not clear whether he was worried or excited or a mixture of a bit of jealousy and shock.

Meanwhile, in the Roland army's barracks, Tiger looked coldly at the fierce battle and said, "It is almost time! Tell the sorcerers to get ready!"

The man behind then replied, "Didn't Knight Fielding said he wanted to deal with this alone? He doesn't want us to participate... If we interfere, the Paladin will be angry."

Tiger's face sank and suddenly whispered, "Look..."

Suddenly, a gray robed person appeared. That person had a slender figure totally covered in his robe, not even a bit of his skin was visible. Besides that color of the robe, that person looked exactly the same as the Black Veil Saint, Muse, during her time in the grasslands.

The man then said with a hoarse voice, "Fielding is stubborn and headstrong! Ignore him. God's religion has given the order. Naturally, I will explain to Fielding! General Tiger, do what you have to do!"

The figure flashed and then disappeared. Tiger's expression changed as he wiped the sweat from his forehead. Standing beside that figure earlier was like standing at the edge of a cliff. There was a powerful dominating pressure.

"Why are you still stunned? Quickly do as I have commanded!"

Tiger gritted his teeth.

In the Imperial Palace, Andy tightly closed his eyes. From the beginning, the scene of the fierce battle was extremely clear in his eyes. His expression became more serious as he whispered, "A Paladin is truly a Paladin. The Paladin is stronger than Rody. If it was not because of the Mystic Dragon's blood... Hmmm? No!"

The scene of the battlefield had suddenly changed.

The clouds started to roll in and the green sky immediately became darker. A group of sorcerers flew up from the Roland army's barracks and hid behind the clouds.

Thunder started to roar and rain suddenly poured from the clouds. However, the strange thing was it only rained on and at the surrounding area where the two men were fighting. There was no rain at Thunder City or the Roland army's barracks.

The two fought fiercely for a while. Rody took the opportunity of the time when they were both forced to step back and shouted. "What is the meaning of this? This rain is created by your men!" Fielding also looked gloomy. He did not reply Rody. He looked up into the sky and shouted, "Get lost! This is a duel between the two of us!"

Rody coldly shouted, "Despicable Roland people!" He swung his sword and was about to shoot out a blade of light to disperse the clouds. Suddenly, his body shook and he staggered.

That rain was really strange and it felt as if the surroundings were enchanted. Rody could feel a strange force pressing him down. He also felt like he was bounded by an invisible rope.

Rody became angry and shouted, the fighting energy, on his body, burned like a raging fire as he tried to straighten his body to free himself.

Two sorcerers in the sky felt like they got hit by a sledgehammer and spat out blood. They turned pale and slowly descended.

However, two more sorcerers took over their positions. They then stretched out their hands and began to chant.

Rody felt his body becoming more and more strange. The muscles of his entire body trembled violently. It was as if he was being pressed by a heavy mountain... No, not pressed. Squashed! Squashed by a huge force all over!

Rody gradually turned pale. His head was covered in a mix of sweat and rain. Finally, his hands felt weak and he dropped his sword on the muddy ground. He also staggered and almost fell.

Fielding did not take the opportunity to attack. Instead, he stood there and angrily shouted towards the sky, "Stop! You guys better stop right now! Otherwise, you better not blame me for what happens next!"

However, the sorcerers behind the clouds did not listen to him. Instead, more sorcerers joined in and the chanting of the spell became more rapid.

The gate of the Thunder City had already been opened. Sieg had noticed the abnormal situation and had rushed out with the cavalry. When the cavalry was about a thousand paces away from Rody, they felt as if they had slammed into an invisible wall. A few of the cavalymen immediately fell off their horses.

More than ten magicians jumped out from behind the cavalymen and shot numerous balls of light and lightning towards the front. However, the spells were blocked by that invisible wall and exploded in the air.

Tiger, who was standing in the barracks, laughed coldly and murmured. "Your Excellency Duke of the Tulip Family, you must be feeling very uncomfortable... This magic formation is cast by more than a dozen sorcerers... Of course, you will not feel comfortable because this spell is known as 'Dragon Break'."

Rody could barely stand. He felt a strange force severely twisting

his body. The twist felt like his soul was being squeezed out of his body.

The only thing left in him now was his consciousness as he looked hard at Fielding. Even the anger in his eyes started to diminish. Finally, Fielding roared and charged towards the thick dark clouds in the sky. His sword brandished a huge wave of energy and ruthlessly shot towards the thick clouds.

"Your Excellency Paladin, are you trying to protect your dignity? Unfortunately, it is too late." Tiger gently touched his chin and smiled coldly.

Fielding had dispersed the dark clouds in the sky. He had slashed mightily, sending out huge waves of energy. There were signs of some effect. Fielding took a deep breath and was going to slash again but then a figure with a gray robe appeared in mid-air. The figure's long cloak covered his body completely. He held a small bow, about one-third of the size of a normal bow, in his hand. However, the bowstring had a demonic silvery color.

"Knight Fielding, please stop, in the name of the Elders of the Temple!" The gray-robed man's voice floated in the air.

"Gray-Robed Saint!" Fielding was stunned for a moment and then he said, "You! Are you trying to interfere with my fair duel?"

That gray robed man looked at Fielding and said in a hoarse voice, "His Excellency. The Elders of the Temple have given the order to kill the Duke of the Tulip Family at all costs!"

"But!" Fielding clenched one of his fists tightly while holding his sword with the other hand, which was gently trembling. He gritted his teeth and said, "But this is my duel! A knight's fair duel should not be defiled by anything!"

"Knight Fielding!" The Gray-Robed Saint spoke with a soft voice. "If you are a Paladin of the Temple, please follow the teachings of the Elders!"

Having said that, the Saint no longer looked at Fielding and raised the small bow with both his hands.

A beautiful silver light gleamed as an arrow shot forward like a snake.

The silver light flashed through the rain and the darkness as it flew towards Rody on the ground. Fielding's eyes grew wide as he exclaimed, "God Slaying Bow!"

Rody suddenly roared on the ground. His voice was like a wounded beast, full of anger and pain. His proud, upright body finally fell to the ground. He knelt powerlessly in the rain, trembling, his face distorted. He seemed to be fighting the world's most profound agony... His extremely powerful body could no longer support itself.

That silver arrow had struck his body. Red blood dripped into the muddy ground, running into the rainwater. The red and black liquid mixed together before seeping into the earth.

As if confirming the legend of the tragedy of the God, Achilles, the silver arrow had struck Rody's foot!

Chapter 180: Dragon Transformation

Sieg's eyes were red-rimmed. He drew his sword and slashed several times at the invisible wall in front of him. He then shouted, "Fielding! You are a despicable and shameless Roland person!"

Unfortunately, he was at least a thousand paces away from Rody and Fielding. Although he was shouting, his voice could not be heard.

That Gray-Robed Saint put down his small bow slowly and descended from the sky slowly. He stood beside Fielding and looked at him before saying, "Your Excellency Fielding, you can go ahead and kill him now. The Elders have given the order to kill the Duke of the Tulip Family."

Fielding hesitated as he looked at Rody who was kneeling and trembling on the ground. He then gritted his teeth and replied loudly, "No! I cannot kill him now! This is not the kind of thing I, Fielding, can do!"

He then glanced at the Gray-Robe Saint, beside him, and repeated, "A real Paladin will not do this kind of thing!"

"You fool!" The Gray-Robe Saint muttered softly. His eyes then grew cold and said, "Well, if you are not going to do it, then I will!"

However, he had only taken a step forward when he saw a golden light flash by. A sword then blocked his way.

"No!" Fielding said gloomily. "You cannot kill him too!"

"What?" The Gray-Robe Saint's expression immediately changed and he shouted, "Fielding, what do you mean? Do you want to betray the Temple? I can understand if you refuse to follow the Elder's orders but how dare you stop me from killing him? Are you thinking of protecting this heathen?"

Fielding replied coldly, "Of course not! If it was a normal day on the battlefield, I will definitely kill him. However, today, he came

out after accepting my challenge. If he is killed here today, how can I still call myself a Knight?"

"You fool!" The Gray-Robe Saint stepped forward but Fielding responded by slashing at an empty space. The fierce golden energy from the sword carved a deep hole on the ground right in front of the Gray-Robe Saint.

"Please do not step forward anymore." Fielding said sternly, "I do not want to hurt you."

"How dare you?" The Gray-Robe Saint stepped back and raised his eyebrows as he glared at Fielding. "How dare you raise your hands against me? Fielding, you are too unbridled! Do you really dare to betray the Temple? Where is your loyalty to the Temple? I will report today's incident to the Temple! Are you not afraid of their punishment?"

Fielding had a gloomy expression, but he persisted. "Do as you wish. You can say whatever you like when you return. However, at this moment, right here, I will not let you kill him!"

"Haha haha..." The Gray-Robe Saint suddenly laughed wildly, "Fielding! Your Excellency Paladin! Have you not thought of the consequences? You betray the Temple. You refuse to accept the order of the Temple. You have violated your own faith! How can you still call yourself the Temple's most loyal Paladin?"

Fielding trembled. He was at a loss and his hand holding the sword was also trembling. However, he gritted his teeth and said, "Of course, I know! I did not betray my faith! I know that I am a knight. A real knight will not defeat or kill his opponent this way!"

The Gray-Robed Saint was furious and his eyes flashed. He wanted to attack Fielding but he knew Fielding was, after all, a Temple Paladin. He would not be able to match the strength of a Paladin. Although the Saints were high-ranked sorcerers of the religion, there was only one person in the entire Roland Temple who had achieved the consecrated sorcerer status: the Black Veil

Saint, Muse. Only such a consecrated practitioner could compete with a Paladin. He was no match for the Paladin.

"Hmph..." The Gray-Robe Saint sneered. He then changed his tone and said slowly, "Fielding, no wonder the Black Veil Saint do not love you. You are simply a fool!"

Hearing that, Fielding immediately gave a murderous aura. "What did you say?"

The Gray-Robe Saint immediately retreated two steps, His cultivation was lower than the Paladin. Besides that, the close proximity was a disadvantage for a sorcerer, if he were to fight with a Paladin.

"Am I wrong? You are too stubborn! Do you think your Knight's Spirit is more important than the orders of the Temple?" The Gray-Robe Saint slowly retreated.

Fielding coldly looked at the Gray-Robe Saint and then replied, "I only said I cannot kill him now... Today, after everything is over, I will challenge him to a duel again! I will kill him personally in a fair fight!"

"Pedantic!" The Gray-Robe Saint said coldly before laughing, "Do you think you can stop me from killing the Duke of the Tulip Family just by keeping me away from him?"

Fielding showed a strange expression. Suddenly, he roared and slashed with his sword. A golden light appeared as he fiercely slashed towards the distance. The wave of golden energy struck the invisible wall outside the 'Dragon Break' sorcerer array. The whole sorcerer array only rumbled faintly.

"It is useless..." The Gray-Robed Saint slowly raised one of his hands. He then floated further and further away from Fielding. "Have you forgotten? This sorcerer array is created by dozens of sorcerers using the combination of sorcery. Even with your strength of a Paladin, it would not be so easy to destroy this

sorcerer array! However, it looks like the Duke of the Tulip Family could no longer hold on for long!"

The Saint's voice grew more distant as he floated up faster and faster. Soon, he had flown far away.

Fielding turned around to look at Rody, who was kneeling on the ground. Rody had a hideous facial expression. His mouth was opened as if he was screaming but not a single sound could be heard.

Rody's body shook and struggled as if he was trying to break himself out of some shackles from his body. He stretched his hand towards the arrow stuck in his foot but he could not stretch all the way towards his foot, no matter how hard he tried.

That silver arrow pierced through and was stuck into his heel. Bright red blood flowed quickly and tainted the ground under his foot red. Fielding gritted his teeth and said, "Wait. I will help you pull the arrow out."

He moved towards Rody and stretched his hand to grab the arrow in Rody's foot. However, before he could touch the arrow, he saw a silver light burst out of Rody's foot. Fielding felt like he was struck by lightning. He was immediately flung out and stumbled on a bit before he stopped. He was surprised and felt a burning pain in his hand. He looked down and saw that his hand was charred black.

"Fielding!" The Gray-Robe Saint's low hoarse voice came from the sky, "You are truly foolish. Do you not understand? The arrow shot from the God Slaying Bow is not something you can just pull out, even if you are a Paladin!"

Suddenly, they heard Rody roared. That sound was incomparably mournful as if it was going to break through the sky.

"Hahaha..." The Gray-Robe Saint laughed loudly, from the sky, "It is working! Fielding, I have said, he will still die even if I don't get near him. Don't you know how powerful the God Slaying Bow

is?"

Fielding was drenched with sweat and rain. He felt heavy after hearing what the Gray-Robe Saint said.

Fielding certainly knew how powerful the God Slaying Bow was. As one of the strongest guardians of the Temple, a Paladin, he naturally knew about the secrets of the God Slaying Bow. That was one of the few spiritual artifacts conserved by the Temple of the Roland Continent.

According to legends, the God Slaying Bow was a cursed artifact from the era of the Devil. It not only injures the body but also the soul of the victim, as well. Those shot by the God Slaying Bow would have their souls slowly swallowed up by the power of the curse. That was a real death. After the soul was swallowed, it would wither and vanish.

At that moment, Rody's voice became more and more hoarse. Suddenly, the arrow at his foot glowed with a silvery color, which soon turned into a silver light and then hid inside Rody's body.

The silver light could be faintly seen entering Rody's wound in his foot before it moved quickly up the leg.

Rody's body trembled even more vigorously and his blue veins could be seen. He wanted to clench his fist but he could not move a single finger. The tearing pain in his soul caused his mind to go blank.

"Soon... Very soon..." The Gray-Robe Saint spoke as his body emitted a holy light. His voice was still hoarse but had a very gentle tone. His voice came from far away in the sky but gently rang in Rody's ears. "Do not struggle. No need to struggle against the devouring of your soul. Just relax your body and mind. The pain will end soon. There will no longer be pain or hatred. Everything will be calm. The eternal silence and the eternal end is what you need the most..."

Rody's body gradually bent forward and seemed to have quietened down. Fielding could not help but step back. He felt guilty. He considered himself a real knight and abided by the Knight's Spirit. Although he hated the man in front of him, he felt extremely disgraced to let his enemy die like that. That was because his enemy did not die in his own hands.

"Damn..." Andy was sweating profusely in the Imperial Palace. His eyes were closed tightly but panic was written all over his face. Sky was beside him and could not help but ask, "What is wrong? Old skeleton, tell me. Quick!"

Andy suddenly opened his eyes. His eyes looked like the eyes of a dead person. "There is no other way. This is the power of God's Slaying Bow. Only someone at the 'Domain Force' level can help Rody overcome... Only you can help Rody pull out the arrow shot by that God Slaying Bow... Right now, there is no other way to save him!"

Rody felt the strength of his whole body...no, not the strength, it was his life, seem to gradually disappear. He was swallowed by a kind of void. He could even feel the beating of his heart gradually slow down.

He heard the gentle voice of his opponent. The voice was filled with a strange temptation. "It's the end... eternal silence, eternal end."

Eternal... end?

His vast mind felt like it was pricked by a needle. A familiar and gentle voice then spoke. "Everything goes through a cycle. The stars come after total darkness. The moon rises after every sunset. Flowers wither after they blossomed. Spring arrives after every winter. The cycle will come through. This is the law."

The Gray-Robed Saint, who was floating in the sky, and Fielding, who was standing not far from him, were shocked by what they saw next.

Rody had turned weak and stopped struggling. Suddenly, he started to shake again. As his body shook, he tried to straighten and eventually stood up.

"Arh! Arh! Arh! Arh..." Rody raised his head as he roared again and again. Finally, he tightly clenched his fists. His pale golden fighting energy, that had almost died, suddenly started to burst out again.

"He... How could... What is this?" The Gray-Robed Saint cried out in alarm.

Rody's golden fighting energy suddenly changed. His blonde hair grew like summer weeds. His golden fighting energy had a tinge... a tinge of black.

Although he was not restrained by any physical chains, others could clearly hear those chains being broken.

The flame that surrounded Rody's body rose several meters high. Suddenly, the flame began to shrink and became an extremely dazzling dot.

"Not good!" Fielding was alarmed. He instinctively grabbed his sword and fiercely plunged it into the ground. He grabbed the hilt of the sword tightly with one hand and held the other hand in front of his face.

The dazzling light dot flashed violently, twice.

The soldiers on the wall of the Thunder City, Sieg together with his thousands of soldiers who were waiting outside the city wall, the Gray-Robed Saint floating in the sky and the soldiers in the distant Roland army's barracks, all saw the scene at the same time.

Just like inflating a balloon, the bright dot instantly swelled into a huge ball of light.

The wave of energy on the ground spread out in all directions. Boom! Countless sparks flew. Rody stood still with both his hands open. Finally, the huge ball of light exploded. After numerous crisp

crackling sounds, something seemed to break like glass. The invisible wall in front of Sieg broke apart like a crystal.

The sorcerers who were casting their spells in the sky could not dodge in time. One after another, they spat blood and fell.

The Gray-Robed Saint placed both his hands on his chest. He wrapped his body with a holy light to protect himself.

The huge waves of energy threw Sieg and the others off their feet. The violent wind thrashed the leaves everywhere. Even Rody's horse, Garros, ran far away long before that. It was tossed and rolled out by the violent waves of energy.

Fielding was nearest to Rody. With the wind pulling violently on his cloak, he tried to stand up. His body trembled gently.

The rain in the dark sky had long stopped, but the dark clouds were getting lower and lower. Finally, after a whistling sound, a tornado descended from the sky and wrapped around Rody and Fielding ...

The people on the city wall and at the barracks were stunned. Tiger, the commander of the Roland coalition army, watched with his eyes wide and his mouth agape as he looked at the distant gigantic black tornado. He then murmured in a voice only he could hear, "That guy... he is not human!"

"Disperse!"

After a loud resounding roar, Rody opened up his hands. The tornado surrounding him suddenly turned into a black fog and quickly dissipated!

The dark clouds in the sky had dissipated. The sun shone confidently, changing from an incomparable gloom to brilliant sunshine in an instant. Everybody felt like they had just witnessed a miracle. Sieg and his subordinates had been thrown around all over by the wind. Some had fallen and were slightly injured. This moment they were all sprawled on the ground. After the

surroundings had gradually quietened down, they raised their heads slowly.

Rody was already standing there. The picture of the dragon on his chest seemed to have disappeared. Rody was standing straight and seemed to be at a loss. He stretched out one of his hands and looked at it carefully. After that, he clenched his fist.

"This feeling... seems a little strange..." Rody muttered to himself, "It feels different."

Fielding also finally stood up. He was startled to see Rody nearby, with his back to himself. The wound on his foot, not knowing when had already been completely healed. Rody's golden hair had grown to his waist and was even long enough to drape behind him.

Rody looked at his fist and then slowly opened it again. He whispered, "It seems to be like this?"

Rody voluntarily held out one of his hands, only to hear a rustling sound. The Dragon Fang Sword, which was dropped on the ground some distance away, quickly flew towards him. Rody then caught hold of the hilt of the sword.

Rody then took a deep breath and finally turned around to look at Fielding.

"You are... alright?" Fielding could not help but exclaim. "That is the God Slaying Bow. By right, you cannot undo that spell!"

Rody shook his head. "Indeed, it cannot be undone... I did not undo that arrow... Perhaps, it is God's will."

Fielding was stunned.

God's will?

He stared at the Duke of the Tulip Family and sensed that something was wrong. However, besides Rody's hair growth, there did not seem to be any difference in him or his power. But ... Why ... Why do I feel something is wrong?

"Maybe there are really rules..." Rody spoke to himself, "I became the Duke of the Tulip Family. Master Autumn gave me a seed of power. I absorbed a dragon. Now, I relied on these to escape today's catastrophe. Is it really God's will?"

Rody could not help but look up at the sky. In the sky, the mass of white light wielded by Gray-Robed Saint had been retrieved. He was also looking down intently at Rody, on the ground.

"Hey!" Rody suddenly shouted, "Were you the one who schemed against me, just now?"

Before the Gray-Robed Saint could reply, Rody continued and said coldly, "That phrase, 'eternal silence and eternal end'. You said that! Am I right?"

Rody then said loudly, "You are wrong! There is no eternal end in this world!"

"You... What are you talking about? What is it?" Gray-Robed Saint asked.

Rody smiled coldly and replied, "Even if such a thing as eternal end exists, I can personally crush it!"

Rody suddenly raised his hand holding the sword.

A sharp golden arrow pierced through the sky and the Saint's body shook. Rody's Dragon Fang Sword savagely punched into his body. The Gray-Robed Saint was surprised to see the sword stuck in his chest. It was as if he was looking at the world's most incredible thing. Blood slowly foamed from his mouth as he muttered, "How... How can this be possible?"

A tiny black flame suddenly emerged from the sword. The black flame spread along the blade to the Gray-Robed Saint's body, envelope it, and burned away. It was a fire from hell. Within a short moment, the Saint was burned into ashes... No... There were no ashes left even ... The whole body had completely disappeared.

Only the Dragon Fang Sword remained in the sky. The sword

then fell down and slammed into the ground between Rody and Fielding.

Fielding was stunned to see the sword stuck in the ground in front of him. He then instinctively looked towards the empty sky.

There was nothing left!

There was nothing... Not even a little bit of ashes, dust or slag were left!

"You... You have killed him?" Fielding seemed to squeeze out those words from his throat.

Rody looked coldly at Fielding. He raised his chin slightly and squinted as he looked at Fielding with a murderous aura.

Fielding instinctively stepped back.

"I hate people scheming against me! It is really disgusting!" Rody spoke as he looked at Fielding.

In the Imperial Palace, Andy suddenly sat down. His body seemed to be completely relaxed... Perhaps, cannot say relaxed. He simply felt soft and weak. Andy's face was pale and he had cold sweat on his forehead. He looked somber and his breathing was rapid.

Next to him was the anxious Sky. He could not help but jump over and shouted, "Old skeleton, quickly tell me what you saw. I am very worried." Sky then rudely kicked Andy after saying that.

Andy opened his eyes and looked sideways at Sky. He then sighed. His expression was a mixture of surprise, worry, and a few other emotions.

"What the hell! When did you suddenly become taciturn?" Sky was extremely anxious and could not wait to grab Andy's neck and force him to talk.

Andy gave a forced smile and said, "Well, that boy is fine...for the time being, he is fine."

"Oh?"

Andy nodded his head and continued, "He is really fine. This time, the dragon in his body saved him."

Andy paused for a while and showed a strange expression as he continued, "The dragon on his chest has disappeared. In other words, this is the real integration with the dragon... Fatty..."

Andy then showed a weird smile. "Do you know what I just saw? No... I should say experienced... Do you know what I experienced? It was a really rare scene, for thousands of years..."

Sky wanted to rush up but when he saw Andy's serious expression, he stopped and frowned, "What is it, actually?"

"Dragon God Transformation!" Andy said briefly, "It is the Dragon God Transformation! This is not the fake Dragon Transformation like what that huge snake did... It is the real Dragon God Transformation! The Mystic Dragon's Dragon God Transformation!"

Andy sighed and then continued, "The boy had actually gone through the first Dragon God Transformation. Is this a good or bad thing?"

Chapter 181: Comprehension

"I hate people who scheme against me! It is really disgusting!" Rody spoke as he looked at Fielding.

Fielding started to have cold sweat.

Dead? Did he die just like that? The Gray-Robed Saint of the Temple was so easily killed? Even if that other guy was a Sacred Swordsman and therefore stronger than the Gray-Robed Saint, the difference in strength between the two should not have been that large.

The black flames burnt until nothing was left. Fielding's heart felt heavy watching the sword fall to the ground.

"Shit! The God Slaying Bow!" Fielding suddenly exclaimed and jumped up. He went over ten meters high and looked but there was nothing in the sky. He could not find the God Slaying Bow.

"Are you looking for this?" Rody looked at Fielding, who was still searching in the sky. A burst of flame appeared in his hands. He slowly stretched out his hand. The short bow was wrapped in a black flame. However, the beautiful silver color of the bow had dimmed inside the black flames.

Fielding felt really frantic. He dashed down again and stood in front of Rody. "Why is it in your hands?"

"This?" Rody lightly replied, "I do not know. When I killed that guy, I remembered this and then it just appeared in my hands. Fielding. Is this the God Slaying Bow?"

"Give it back to me!" Instead of stepping back, Fielding moved forward to grab the bow. Rody waved his hand forward, instead of dodging. However, before Fielding's hand could come into contact with the black flames, he immediately pulled his hand away as if he had just experienced an electric shock. He stepped back a few steps and exclaimed, "Hellfire! Aren't you a Sacred Swordsman?"

Why is it that you could use hellfire?"

Rody shook his head and pondered for a bit. After that, his eyes flashed and he smiled. The flames in his hands flickered and then the bow disappeared.

Fielding raised his sword and pointed it at Rody. "Give it back to me! That is an artifact of our Temple!"

Rody ignored him and pulled out the Dragon Fang Sword from the ground. He waved it twice and then he frowned and said, "Something does not feel right..."

Fielding looked somber as he gritted his teeth. "Duke of the Tulip Family. It is not right for them to plot against you. However, you have already killed the Gray-Robed Saint. We are even now! Please return the bow!"

Rody looked up at Fielding. He then lightly said, "Come and take it if you have the skills!"

Fielding did not hesitate and golden fighting energy burst from his body. He charged down and slashed. Rody shook his head, his eye twitched as though he was still thinking. He did not react quickly. Not like the duel earlier where he had used a fierce fighting energy. Instead, he just merely raised his sword.

Fielding immediately felt something strange. His opponent's sword had easily broken through his golden energy and struck hard at the tip of his sword.

Cling! A crisp sound rang out. Fielding felt as if a strange twisting force came from the sword. He instantly felt a sharp pain in his arms and was startled. His hand trembled and he almost dropped his sword. He turned quickly, jumping away a few steps and looked at Rody with a surprised expression. "What kind of move is this?"

Rody was also frowning as he shook his head. He thought to himself and said, "I think it is like this..." He suddenly glanced at Fielding and lifted his sword forward like a poisonous snake. It was

a blur in Fielding's eyes. He could not see the attack clearly. He could only see the sword point in front of him and hastily raised his own sword to block it.

The clash flung Fielding away. He staggered a few steps after crashing before he could stand firmly again.

"What is going on!" He was terrified. His opponent's sword was not wrapped in fighting energy but that attack felt like it had the force of a heavy hammer.

Rody's blank expression had vanished and he smiled lightly. He then sighed gently and said, "I understand. I finally understand..."

Facing the Paladin, he unexpectedly closed his eyes and muttered, "The sword in my hand is my anger and spirit. It strikes like the Autumn wind and is cold like Winter... Master Autumn. This must be what you mean by real swordsmanship."

Rody then shook his head and turned to leave.

"Duke of the Tulip Family!" Fielding roared. Gritting his teeth, he grabbed his sword with two hands and slashed out a golden spiral wave at Rody.

Rody frowned and turned around. Instead of using his sword, Rody merely raised his left hand with the palm opened. The spiral wave struck his hand and disintegrated!

There was no explosion, no splinters, or radiation of energy.

It just disintegrated.

"Fielding," Rody called out. "You can no longer defeat me. You did not kill me just now. So, I will no longer fight with you. Our duel ends here."

"Nonsense!" Fielding said with a pale expression. He had clearly seen how his opponent had resisted his wave of fighting energy with just one hand. However, the pride of a knight does not allow him to give up so easily. He shouted, "I am a Paladin of the Temple!

Do you think you can defeat me? Who was the one who struggled so badly just now?"

"It was me," Rody admitted calmly. "Just now, I was not a match for you. Although I had reached the strength of a Sacred Swordsman, in terms of strength and experience, or knowledge, I was a little bit weaker than you. I could fight with you for so long earlier because I relied on my body's resistance."

"Then let us continue!" Fielding clasped the sword in his hands.

"No need." Rody shook his head and said, "You no longer can defeat me, Knight Fielding. Thank you for your help earlier. It made me comprehend some strange things. I think I have broken through something..."

"What did you break through?" Fielding eyes grew wide with surprise as he said, "Are you talking about Domain Force?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "No. It is not Domain Force. However, I can feel myself standing in front of a door. If I can push this door open, I would comprehend Domain Force. What I meant was that I can now understand the rules a little."

Fielding's fighting energy was still burning brightly but Rody was standing silently. When he heard Rody's words, Fielding could not help but laugh and said, "You talk too much. Let's see how you actually fare!"

Rody frowned and looked at Fielding. He then lightly said, "Do you know that we are at the same level? Do you know what is the biggest difference between us and those with Domain Force? He slowly pointed at Fielding and said, "It is how we utilize the power!"

"There are rules in this world. That rule is that nothing is eternal, including power. Someone once told me that you are not stronger just because you have more power. I understood this today." Rody laughed. "Let me tell you this before I leave. Your

moves and strikes were very powerful and earth-shattering... However, it disappeared before it could hit your opponent. You have a lot of fighting energy. The golden light was bright and dazzling. You just need to restrain your fighting energy. Fielding. Do you know that it is easy to blow a balloon? But, it is difficult to compress that balloon into a point. Like this..."

Rody stretched out both of his hands. There was no fighting energy and the movement was casual.

In front of Fielding, Rody only pointed his fingers. There was a loud explosion and a large and deep ravine immediately appeared.

Rody then strode away, leaving behind the surprised Fielding.

He was not worried that Fielding would attack him from the back. Based on his character, Fielding would not attack someone from the back. Besides that, Rody was not afraid of Fielding even if he attacked.

Rody gathered his disorganized men like Sieg and the others and went back to the city, leaving behind the puzzled Fielding. Fielding instinctively put down his sword, as if using it as a crutch to support himself.

The gates opened. Rody brought his subordinates into the city while numerous soldiers, lined up on both sides, cheered, "Long live the Duke! Long live the Tulip Family!"

The people on the walls also cheered loudly. In their eyes, Rody looked like a god. The scene they saw earlier was shocking. The kind of battles with fierce wind and rain, together with the huge light ball was like the legendary battles of the undefeatable God of War.

Rody was riding Garros. The horse did not suffer any injuries. The fierce wind made it run away but then the horse came back after that.

After the cheering, only the mouths of two people remained shut.

The first one was Milo while the other was the Bishop Elder of the God's religion.

Milo had a complicated expression while the Bishop Elder had a strange gaze.

"That scene earlier. Was that the Dragon Transformation?"

The most depressed person was undoubtedly Tiger. He had carefully prepared that duel. He originally thought that sending out the Paladin and then using the Dragon Break spell would allow them to get rid of the Duke of the Tulip Family. Everybody knew what would happen if the banner of the Duke was lost.

Now the Dragon Break spell was destroyed, dozens of sorcerers were seriously injured and many more have temporarily lost their sorcery ability. Most importantly, the Gray-Robed Saint has perished and the God Slaying Bow was lost.

Either one of these incidents could finish him off publicly.

What kind of image did the Temple Saints have? On the Roland Continent, the Saints have more authority than the Kings except for the Sauron Kingdom. They had one of the highest positions in the Temple. Now that they lost the God Slaying Bow...Tiger shuddered at the thought.

Fielding was silent after he returned to the barracks. He did not even bother to look at Tiger. He felt extreme disdain towards the commander of the coalition army. In Fielding's point of view, these people have tarnished an honest duel.

Tiger also did not dare to approach Fielding as he was a Paladin.

The various kingdoms' army commanders were anxious and noisily talking among themselves. Tiger was no longer patient and he was angry as he shouted, "Fine! You want to fight? You want to fight? Go ahead then! From today onwards, I want a total siege! All the sorcerers will attack too! I don't believe that we cannot kill the Duke of the Tulip Family!"

Everybody became quiet when they saw their supreme commander got angry. Tiger then, in a low voice, ordered murderously. "From tomorrow onwards, I want a full siege. Those who go up there are not allowed to return even if they are the last one alive! Those who try to escape will be executed!"

The next day, the Empire soldiers in Thunder City immediately felt a different kind of oppressive atmosphere.

When the sky had just turned bright, the Roland army has already begun their siege. In the morning, three assaults were repelled. By the afternoon, the Roland army started to become desperate.

Tiger had killed four commanding knights and six hundred soldiers and officers that retreated. He threw their heads to the ground and shouted, "I have already spoken very clearly. Nobody is allowed to retreat, even if we are down to the last man!"

Tiger's personal army formed a solid line at the rear of these soldiers with their swords and shields. Those that retreated would die while those who advanced could fight for their lives. The Roland soldiers finally started to demonstrate unprecedented bravery and ferocity.

Since they would die if they retreated, it would be better to go charge in front and fight. At the very least, they would have a ray of hope.

Group after group of Roland soldiers charged to the walls and erected their ladders. The soldiers scaled the ladders with red eyes. They see their companions above scream miserably as they fall down the walls when hit with falling rocks. Others did not even bother to look and continued to climb the ladder that had been dyed red with blood.

On the walls, the archers continued to shoot their arrows. They no longer needed to aim! The Roland army below had packed tightly together as they held a gigantic wooden log to ram the

gates, miserably crying out again and again. But no one retreated. The Roland soldiers were covered in blood. Some wished that they could also use their heads to smash the gate open.

More than ten thousand Roland soldiers sieged the city the entire day. In the afternoon, they had managed to scale the wall and occupied a small section of it. However, the Flame Warriors managed to recapture it with their counterattacks.

The surprising thing was, even though the Roland soldiers had been pushed back to their ladders, their escape route, not one of them retreated further and they fought to the last man!

In the evening, the walls of the city were covered with corpses. Below the walls, there were piles and piles of corpses. The air was filled with the stench of blood. The floors of the city walls were wet and slippery, saturated with blood. Blood puddles had also formed in some places."

It was a shocking sight. There were broken limbs everywhere. A step in any direction would meet with a broken body or broken sword. Exhausted soldiers gasped for breath at the sides, and severely injured soldiers mournfully begged to be put out of their misery.

That pile of dead bodies below the wall had blocked the gate. Thousands of corpses, with arrows in them, lied where they fall beside the wooden ramming log. These soldiers fought to their last drop of blood.

The rugged gates of Thunder City had been damaged. The gates were made from the scarce ironwood in the Radiant Empire. It was the same kind used by the Roland armies to build ships. Although the ironwood was reinforced with iron bars, some of these were broken after a day of fierce fighting. Those that were not broken were twisted."

The soldiers of the Empire were busy carrying corpses and wounded soldiers down the wall. Many others also recovered the

rocks dropped from the walls. The buildings in Thunder City near the gates had been demolished and the stones carried to the city walls for defense. Some were used by craftsmen for strengthening the walls.

Outside the city, hundreds of Roland army soldiers in white were cleaning up the battlefield. They carried back the wounded and the dead Roland army soldiers. The soldiers of the Empire also did not shoot them with their arrows. Both parties had a silent, somber mutual understanding in carrying out their cleaning work.

Both continent's sorcerers and the magicians took this opportunity to recover their energy. Both sides had clashed against each other several times in the fierce battle that day. However, the Empire magicians were at a total disadvantage. This was because the Roland sorcerers had used combined sorcery to increase their power. The magicians of the Empire were defeated and some of them perished.

Even when Rody fought with the sorcerers he had to rely on his tough body to ward off the blows. After a day of battle, Rody was extremely exhausted.

That night, the sky was dark as the moonlight was bleak; as though the heavens sighed. The soldiers on the castle wall sat on the floor as they gathered in small groups. They were calm and occasionally they looked at the golden Tulip Banner on the gates.

The soldiers' eyes were steadfast, filled with trust and worship.

Chapter 182: Rody Can Scheme Too

It was the tenth day of the war.

"What the h*ll!" Sieg groaned as he stepped back. He had just cut down a knight but he was also slashed at by the enemy. If he had not dodged fast enough or if he had not worn such a solid armor, he would have died.

After fighting for so many days, both armies were exhausted.

Earlier, a group of knights had rushed at the city wall. These people were significantly stronger than the other soldiers from the Roland army. They looked like the elite Holy Knights. Sieg led his Wolf Fang soldiers to fight against them. Hundreds of men from both sides perished before the Roland army was finally repelled.

Rody had fought a fierce battle against the Paladin in the morning. In the end, Rody managed to slash Fielding. Several Roland Holy Knights then appeared to fight against Rody before they managed to drag Fielding away to save his life.

Rody felt a little dizzy. He was powerful and ordinary opponents would not be able to hurt him. However, he was exhausted because was not a god.

Besides fighting against Fielding on the city wall, Rody had also fought against the enemy sorcerers that morning. Now, he was only taking a breather in the city.

Rody could not remember the number of people he had killed. His body was covered in blood and his clothes were soaked in blood too under his armor. His armor was full of traces of being slashed by swords. He was just slashed at by Fielding and he was injured a little. Although he was strong, he was still injured by the Paladin's attack. Fielding had used all of his strength and destroyed the shoulder part of the armor. Rody's was injured but Fielding also spat out blood. Rody had confidence in his own strength. He

believed that his attack was enough to make sure Fielding could not appear for half a month.

Rody removed a broken arm which had landed on his shoulder. As he watched the Roland army retreat like the tide, he felt more and more somber.

The past few days their opponents had become more aggressive with their attacks. Although Rody did not know the exact number he was certain the enemy lost at least one hundred thousand soldiers. More than a hundred thousand of the Roland army soldiers perished below the wall of Thunder City.

The whole wall looked like it had been washed with blood. The original blackish green wall had been stained a dark red color.

The number of soldiers around him started to reduce. Some familiar faces disappeared forever after a day.

An even more terrifying thing had happened the previous evening. The Roland people had brought in another group of sorcerers. The rank of those sorcerers seemed to be a lot higher. During that day's battle, the combination of large-scale sorcery that they used was even more amazing. They had summoned a fireball. Under the ferocious explosion of that fireball, a corner of the city wall had cracked.

If it was not because of the joint defense by the Empire's magicians, the opponent's second fireball would probably have blown up the wall.

In the final crucial moment, Rody charged to the sky alone with his sword. He fiercely collided against the fireball, created by the opponent's sorcerers. Rody killed two of the sorcerers before descending from the sky.

Before he could rest he had to rush out again to battle against Fielding who had arrived at the city. At that moment, Rody felt that he was completely drained of energy and he could feel a

tearing pain in his lungs.

The combination of sorcery they used was too powerful!

Rody saw for himself the combined forces of the dozen opponent's high-ranking sorcerers. Although the Empire's magicians were also defending desperately, there were two magicians who were burnt to death. Those two magicians were Grade 4 magicians.

Even Rody almost spat out blood after a serious fight with the opponent. That was the first time Rody felt like that ever since he integrated with the Mystic Dragon's power in the Imperial Capital.

Rody dare not imagine. If the enemy were to convene a few more higher-ranked sorcerers and if they were to launch their sorcery together, then the city wall would definitely be destroyed.

If they encounter such power, even Rody himself would not be able to hold out.

After all, he is not an immortal.

Only that abnormal fellow, Sky, could take such an attack. However, if the sorcerers were to join forces with several Saints, even Sky, who had obtained 'Domain Force' may not be able to hold off.

Damn! How did the sorcerers of the Roland Continent suddenly become so powerful? How did their combination of sorcery inexplicably enhance their power by so many folds?

Before that, if someone asked Rody whether one plus one equaled two, Rody would have nodded. But after seeing the combination of sorcery and the multiplied effect, Rody was no longer sure that he would answer that earlier question as confidently as before.

Rody took a deep breath and went to Sieg's side. He looked at Sieg's injury and smiled wryly. "How is it?"

Sieg shook his head and looked at the flesh and blood on Rody's

shoulder. "Your Excellency the Duke, are you also injured?"

Rody nodded his head and replied, "That Fielding is really worthy to be called a Paladin."

The two men sat down with the support of their subordinates. The subordinates then left to find a healer. The healer was also exhausted and pale after using too much magic to heal the wounded soldiers. However, the magician can still cast a few spells. After treating Rody, the magician looked at Sieg and frowned, "Your Honor, Sieg. This is the third time you are injured. It is not suitable to heal this with magic. Please see a military doctor! Although magical treatment can heal your injury in a short time, it has a side effect on your body. To apply magical treatment multiple times in a short period, would be like an overdraft of your life. Although the wounds can be healed, the loss of blood cannot be replaced. You need a military doctor!"

Sieg laughed and loudly said, "Nonsense! Quickly treat me! The after effects are future issues. altogether. Right now, just treat this wound! Damn, it is still bleeding. Do you know how painful it is?"

The magician glanced at Rody. Rody shook his head and lightly said, "Well, just ignore him. Go and get a military doctor."

Rody then looked at Sieg, who was about to speak and said, "Your Excellency, Sieg. Do you want to throw away your life? The magical treatment is a short-term method used to accelerate the healing of wounds. It is also an overdraft on your life. If used frequently, your body would not be able to hold on.

Sieg sighed and said, "The battle is more important. Any after effects are a thing of the future. If we lose the battle, we would die and there would be no future anyway. Do you think I am a weak and fragile person like Milo?"

Rody shook his head. Before he could speak, they heard Milo's cold voice from behind. "Your Honor, Sieg. What did you say about me?"

Milo walked over as he tried to straighten his waist. With every step he took, the pain at his waist showed on his face. He was slashed at the waist and almost died the day before. The one who slashed Milo was a big knight from the Roland Continent. Sieg later assisted Milo and they both killed that knight. However, Milo was seriously injured.

"Your Excellency, Sieg. Although you saved my life yesterday, I will still fight you if you humiliate me." Milo gritted his teeth, as cold sweat rolled down his forehead... painfully.

Rody looked at Milo's waist and frowned. "Your Excellency, Milo. Did you also get the magician to heal you? Didn't they say that it is better for you to stop using magical treatment, now?"

Milo coldly replied, "Seth, do you think other people are like you, can survive all the slashes without injury? Right now, from commanders to soldiers, who is without any injury?"

Rody gave a wry smile and did not seem to pay any attention to Milo's thorny words.

Although the conflicts between Milo's and Rody's families had given Rody a tough time, Rody had to admit that Milo was a real man. Although Milo had used his family's influence to rise to the position of a Regiment Commander, he was actually quite strong. He was a valiant warrior in battle and did not have any of those bad noble habits. Due to the grudges between them, they would occasionally attack each other with words. However, after fighting in the same camp for so many days, Rody had long been accustomed to Milo's cold words.

Sieg also pretended not to hear Milo's words. He reluctantly stood up and looked at the Roland barracks in the distance. He then sighed and said, "These Roland soldiers are really good at risking their lives. Your Excellency the Duke, we have four hundred thousand soldiers. Why did we not mobilize all of them from Thunder City? If we charge and fight with them, below the

city wall, I believe that our army..." He looked at Milo and then continued, "And with the strength of the Northern Legion, we would not lose even if they have twice our number of soldiers."

Rody shook his head. He sighed and pointed at the distance as he said, "There are several kilometers from Thunder City to the ocean. Commander Sieg. If we were to really mobilize all our soldiers from the Northern Legion, and fight with them, we will definitely not lose. By virtue of our army's strength, we have a good chance of winning. But..." Rody continued pointing to the distance and said, "Can you see? They have twice our number of people. Even if they were defeated, and only have a hundred thousand soldiers remaining, with a formation of that size in that position we would not be able to charge at them. This is because we would be within the range of their warship's artillery. What I want is not to kill several hundred thousand of their soldiers. I want to get rid of their entire army!"

He turned to look at Sieg and Milo and lightly said, "I believe they will have reinforcements. By that time, I am afraid they will have more than eight hundred thousand soldiers."

"Hmph... Are the Roland people crazy?" Sieg sneered. "Are they trying to send everyone from their continent over? With so many troops, they would collapse due to the lack of supplies!"

"In your dreams!" Milo coldly said, "Collapse? They have a huge fleet in the ocean. They can continuously transport supplies from the Roland mainland by the ocean. Drag them down? Your Honor, Sieg, haven't you personally seen their fleets?"

Sieg sighed. He shook his head when he recalled the huge naval fleet of the Roland army.

Rody pondered for a moment and lightly said, "The time is almost right... We have intercepted them for ten days. It's almost time for us to withdraw. Let's give them, Thunder City."

Sieg and Milo frowned. Sieg could not help but ask, "You

Excellency the Duke, do you still insist on doing this? Is it really alright to give Thunder City to them?"

Rody sighed and replied, "It would be impossible to kill all the eight hundred thousand or even more than a million soldiers, at the beach below Thunder City. We can only lure them inside. Once they enter our territory... however powerful their huge Navy may be, they still cannot come ashore. Once their army has gone inland, their navy cannot transport supplies to them anymore. The land is our advantage! In the past ten days, the people from the Northern Legion must have already completed the preparations I requested."

Milo coldly said, "This you can rest assured. My men are personally trained by me!"

"Ah!" Rody nodded. He was aware of the strength of the Northern Legion: they were very strong.

In the past few days' performance on the battlefield, the strength of Milo's Northern Legion far exceeded the strength of the Northwest Legion during the time Rody went to the Northwest. If one did not look at Milo's character, he was indeed an outstanding general.

"Then let us withdraw!" Rody gritted his teeth. "Our losses in the past few days are also quite severe. We have lost half of the fifty thousand heavy-armor infantries. Although the Lightning God's Whip did not participate in defending the walls, they have also lost a lot of soldiers on the battlefield. Right now, the Lightning God's Whip only has about several tens of thousands of soldiers remaining. They cannot be lost here."

Milo raised his eyebrows and did not speak. He was confident of his own soldiers but he still must admit that the fifty thousand Lightning God's Whip were amongst the most elite soldiers of the Empire. As a cavalry, they are definitely the strongest cavalry in the Empire.

Sieg thought for a moment. "Duke. In that case, who would guard

the rear when we retreat? The Lightning God's Whip or the Northern Legion?"

Rody suddenly laughed. Sieg and Milo were surprised to hear him laugh. His laugh sounded somewhat evil.

Evil?

Rody had laughed evilly.

"The ones guarding the rear?" Rody lightly said, "Let the Flame Warrior Regiment do it. To begin with, this is a battle of faith. Let the devout believers put in more effort!"

Naturally, Rody also added something else in his heart but did not say it out. Didn't the God's religion have some kind of God's Vanquish spell? We fought so hard against the sorcerers but why did they not use that spell? Hmph. Hiding and evading, that's what they wish!

Perhaps, Rody has really changed.

Chapter 183: Die After The War

Andy was standing in the sleeping quarters of the Imperial Palace. He held a glass of wine in his hands as he gently put down that day's newspaper. The newspaper was full of encouraging war stories and slogans. Under the advice of Andy, Emperor of the Empire, the newspaper publicly announced the defeat of Reuenthal in the Northwest and after that focused on the war in the North.

Numerous stories were reported. That day, the news was about how His Excellency the Duke of the Tulip Family led a group of heroes of the Empire to defeat the enemy. About ten thousand of the Roland soldiers were beheaded.

The next day, the newspaper wrote that His Excellency the Duke of the Tulip Family had once again, leading the soldiers, defeated and beheaded twenty thousand enemy soldiers.

The following day's newspaper said the same thing except that it was thirty thousand soldiers. And that went on and on...

All kinds of news of victories were published in the newspaper. The ridiculous thing was that the news claimed that Rody had killed twenty thousand one day and then thirty thousand the next day. If these victories were to be placed together, it would have already exceeded half of the Roland army's forces.

If the statements in the newspaper were true, then there would be only a few tens of thousands soldiers remaining in the Roland army. If that 'war' were to continue, in accordance with the same frequency of success, then the enemy would have a negative number of soldiers within the next few days.

Andy sighed and whispered, "Ah... Why is the public so easily fooled?"

Sky eyes turned supercilious and said, "That is because you

controlled the newspaper. Everything you do or say is excessive. You tricked them and then you sarcastically call them stupid."

Andy laughed and said, "I had no choice too... With war looming, how else could I have ensured the stability of the Empire? Sigh... That Emperor was really useless. The Empire ended up in a turmoil because of him. To tell you the truth, the Empire is now united against the foreign enemy because of me, acting as the Emperor. If it was not me, but Abbas XI, in charge there would be a riot even before the war is over!"

Andy then laughed proudly and sipped his wine. He sighed pleasantly and said, "Wine is a really good thing... It is also good for the body!"

"Hmph!" Sky was still supercilious as he said, "You can still drink even though you do not have a body. Isn't it interesting to see a skeleton drink wine?"

Andy was already accustomed to this bickering with Sky and laughed. He then asked, "Fatty, I wish to ask you a question. I am not sure...How powerful is that boy now? Has he already obtained 'Domain Force'?"

"That." Sky shook his head in disdain. "'Domain Force'? If he really has obtained 'Domain Force', then he would not be injured by that Paladin. If it was me, that Fielding would have been cut into several pieces long ago."

Andy sighed and said, "How much stronger does he need to be? I feel that he has changed a lot after the Dragon's Transformation."

Sky thought to himself for a while and then he replied, "I am not sure. He is probably just a little bit short. It is just that little bit like a piece of paper. The moment he crosses that last step, he would breakthrough. Right now, he is at the peak of a Sacred Swordsman. Regardless from which aspect, preparations for that breakthrough is ready...That boy is really stupid! All he needs now is to take one more step and he would immediately be levitated

heavenwards. Right now, he still needs to strive hard to fight against the Paladin. However, if he could just cross that last step, then he would only need to wave his hand to wipe out that Paladin."

"Oh? He would be that strong?" Andy said, "Didn't you say that his strength is only just a little bit short of getting 'Domain Force'?"

"Of course!" Sky was now serious. "That little bit is like a dividing line. There would be a world of difference after crossing that line. Right now, it is like cutting down a tree. After cutting it a bit, the tree starts to shake. With a little bit more effort, the tree would fall!" After saying that, Sky started to curse. "Anyway, that boy is too stupid!"

"Stupid?" Andy stared at Sky. "Fatty, since you are so formidable, how long did it take for you to obtain 'Domain Force'? If Rody is stupid for taking so long to obtain 'Domain Force', then what about you?"

"... " Sky's face immediately turned a little red. However, he was still candid about it. Although he was unhappy, he loudly said, "Say what you wish! I was not a warrior. I was a knight!"

The moment he said that Andy laughed until he almost fell off his throne. He then pointed to Sky with his trembling finger and said, "Knight? You said you used to be a knight?" Andy had a funny face as he looked at Sky's plumpish body and continued to laugh, "What kind of horse could carry such a heavy knight, like you?"

Sky became furious and kicked him as he replied, "I was not fat those days!"

Andy dodged the kick and laughed, "So, Your Excellency, Knight Sky, were you a Paladin, then?"

Sky had a strange look. He whispered, "Can be considered... But do not ask me anything about it. I do not want to talk about it!"

Andy gave him a meaningful glance but he did not pursue that

subject anymore. Instead, he asked, "Well then, Your Excellency, Paladin Sky. How long did you take to obtain 'Domain Force' from a Paladin? One month or two months?"

"Shit!" Sky let out a torrent of abusive words and shouted, "What do you think 'Domain Force' is? Do you think it is something for sale? Let me tell you. Those days, I was a true talent. At the age of thirty-two, I became the youngest Paladin in the Roland continent. After that, I spent a full fifteen years cultivating and obtained 'Domain Force' at forty-seven years old. I was then the youngest person with 'Domain Force' in hundreds of years!"

Andy pursed his lips and said, "The youngest person to obtain 'Domain Force'? Forty-seven years old? I wonder how old Master Autumn was when he died? I seemed like he was not even forty-seven years old."

These words turned Sky's face a shade darker. After thinking for a while, he said, "No matter what, that boy, Rody is such a waste. He has the Mystic Dragon in his body yet he still has not obtained 'Domain Force'. Don't you think that he is useless? If I were the one that had converted the Mystic Dragon, I would have already killed those guys in the sky!"

Andy sneered and said, "If you had converted the Mystic Dragon? If you had done that, you would have been dead! Do you think that just anyone can convert the Mystic Dragon?"

Sky's eyes flashed as he whispered, "What did you say? What do you mean?"

Andy laughed playfully and said, "You do not want to tell me about yourself so why should I tell you about my secret?"

Andy paced slowly and then finished all the wine in his glass in one gulp. After that, he threw away the glass and lightly said, "Get up. Rody is about to take action... but he has a shocking plan... Didn't expect that our young friend has already learned how to scheme..."

"Oh?"

Andy nodded and said, "Take a guess. When he withdraws, who do you think he is going to assign to cover the rear?"

Sky pursed his lips and said, "That boy, he would most probably be a hero and lead his own Lightning God's Whip at the rear."

Andy shook his head and laughed softly, "No, he is sending the Flame Warrior Regiment to their deaths at the rear."

Sky jumped the moment he heard that and laughed, "Good! Good! The boy has finally started to learn! Let those two religious groups go at each other!" The more he laughed, the louder it became. "Haha... This time, I suppose the Pope would lose his calm. Tens of thousands of Flame Warriors would be sacrificed by Rody. Roland Continent's hundreds of thousands of soldiers could easily defeat the tens of thousands of the Flame Warriors. At that time, they would have no choice but to use the God's Vanquish spell. Hmph! He obviously knew that the opponent's combination of sorcery is powerful and yet he continued to pretend. I wonder what his intentions are."

Andy shook his head and said, "It is not just the Church. Even the Temple of the Roland Continent did not use their trump card. The current combination of sorcery is cast by some normal high ranked sorcerers. If they were to send their real highest ranked sorcerers, and even without the Saints, their combination of sorcery would already allow them to capture Thunder City. Isn't the Temple holding back too?"

Sky sighed and said, "It does not matter whether it is combination of sorcery or combined technique. Both are powerful but they are not invincible. If they were invincible, why would there be Gods? According to legend, these spells have flaws. Otherwise, the humans who have mastered these two spells during the God and Devil war would not have suffered such heavy losses."

"Yes..." Andy smiled and said, "This is why both religious groups

are being patient and would not dare use their trump card so early."

"Alright!" Andy stretched his waist and said, "An Emperor also has the work of an Emperor. Although an Emperor's life is fun, his job is troublesome... Today, there is also some troublesome work that needs to be done. I have always hated acting but it is something that must be done."

...

Marquis Garoline had closed the doors to his house for a very long time. Ever since the incident at the court, the entire Lionheart Family had stayed out of sight. Even when the newspapers socially attacked him, Marquis Garoline was determined to stay at home and refused to see anyone.

He knew the Emperor deliberately shut out his family. Otherwise, nobody would dare to socially attack a big noble family of the Empire, unless they no longer wished to live.

However, Marquis Garoline, cunning and clear minded, knew that it was actually a good thing for the Emperor to spurn his family.

If the Emperor was determined to get rid of the Lionheart family, then why bother to shut him out? It would be easier to just send a group of Imperial Guards to kill them.

Besides that, Milo still had military power in the North. He was fighting the war against the Roland people in the North. If his family was eliminated at this moment, a mutiny might break out.

The Emperor's action showed that the Emperor was angry and was punishing them for that court incident. After punishing them and venting his anger, there would no longer be any problems.

If the Emperor did not bother to deal with them and only left them at the side, it would be even more dangerous. In that case, it would be more likely for the Emperor to destroy the Lionheart

Family right after the war ended.

Marquis Garoline had always believed in one thing. In this world, if a person made a huge effort to do something, then that act must have a purpose.

In other words, the Emperor's act of shutting them out was to vent his anger and also to punish and warn them.

He also believed that it meant the Emperor had not given up on the Lionheart Family. There was also a chance for him to regain his influence.

But Marquis Garoline could not understand one thing. How did the Emperor's mind suddenly become so sharp after a serious illness? His schemes have also become formidable! This was something he could not understand no matter how much he thought about it.

Sure enough, that day things started to change.

Under the protection of a large number of Imperial Guards, the Emperor, Abbas XI visited the Lionheart Family's mansion.

The excuse was to visit the sick Marquis, Garoline.

Being sick was just an excuse. Although Marquis Garoline was old, he was still very tough. He could still eat and drink. Occasionally, at night, he still wanted to have fun with his concubine. Although he was no longer as mighty as when he was young, he could still be considered as old and vigorous. He was not sick. It was just an excuse to hide at home.

Now that the Emperor had visited him, it was a signal that the Emperor was giving him another chance.

So, when the Emperor greeted him, he immediately said, "Although I am sick, I still worry about the country. Despite my illness, I am willing to share Your Majesty's burden. I will strive to the utmost until my dying day."

The Emperor was naturally very pleased and praised Marquis Garoline for his loyalty to the kingdom. Before he left, he did not forget to tell Garoline, "Currently, the military is busy because of the war. I hope the Military Minister would spare no effort in carrying this burden."

The next day, Marquis Garoline had recovered and went back to work at the military office.

Andy had said, "Both the young and old men of the Lionheart Family are not useless. Although they are immoral and not very nice people, their abilities are real. Now there is a war which caused disorder and since I am the Emperor, it would not be appropriate for me to act as the Military Minister. I cannot cope too. There is too much that needs to be done. It is better to make this old man, who is experienced in military affairs, to some work."

As for the Marquis' saying "strive to the utmost until one's dying day", Andy and Sky said, "It is better if this old man is dead. We cannot really kill this large Lionheart Family, here. After all, he was in the Imperial Capital for so many years and is very influential. It would not be good to kill him. However, if he must die, it is better for him to die after the war is over!"

Chapter 184: New Army

The war had been going on for a long time. The Empire had been damaged from the war. However, under the restructuring by Emperor Abbas XI, who suddenly became wise, the Empire was revitalized. In addition, news of the victories of the Duke of the Tulip Family constantly spread to the Imperial Capital and inspired the people.

The war had been going on for some time. The Empire's old and rickety war machine, under the direction of the suddenly wise Abbas XI, was revitalized. In addition, news of the victories of the Duke of the Tulip Family constantly spread to the Imperial Capital and inspired the people.

However, one afternoon, the everything changed.

One afternoon, many people in the Imperial Capital saw a person on a horse, rushing urgently into the city from the North gate. The knight was in a sorry state. His helmet and armor were in disarray. His face was a mess of sweat and grime. A red flag fluttered on his back, signifying a military urgency.

The messenger immediately shouted, "Urgent war report from eight hundred miles away!"

The guards at the city gate did not dare to stop him and immediately gave way. They had also dispatched two cavalymen to pave the way for the messenger.

As the three horses rushed through the main street, the people saw the serious and anxious expression of the messenger. The people who saw that felt nervous. Was there any bad news from the front lines?

The military office had been extremely busy with requests until the people in charge almost became crazy. For example, the Northwest Commander Elliot asked for supplies and

reinforcements, the North requested for deployment of supplies for the war, manage all the garrison regiment maneuvers, the Southern Legion requested for mobilization of the army and also the request for weapons and horses... Yet, Marquis Garoline remained firm. However, even the unshakeable Marquis became restless when he saw the urgent report delivered to him.

The Marquis did not even have the time to prepare for a carriage. He hurriedly rode to the Imperial Palace, with his subordinates.

After all, Marquis Garoline was old. It was tiring for him to ride to the Imperial Palace. When he arrived at the palace, he almost fell off his horse from exhaustion. He was gasping for breath, but still pushed away the guards who were trying to support him. He then ran all the way into the palace.

Gossip was amongst the fastest things that could spread in the world. The only thing that could spread faster than gossip would be bad news.

At night, the news of defeat in the North came. Thunder City had fallen. The Duke of the Tulip Family had withdrawn and had taken the soldiers towards the Northern provinces to organize an internal defense. After a bloody battle at Thunder City, nearly thirty thousand of the Flame Warriors were annihilated.

The Imperial Capital was in an uproar.

The news of defeat created a gloomy cloud over the Imperial Capital. At that same time, a small force was on the way to the North.

In the unbounded wilderness, dense dark clouds covered the horizon. Oliseh, who was riding his horse, could not help but frown. "I hope it will rain, tonight."

Oliseh looked behind him and saw that the carriages were loaded with military supplies. At least half of the supplies were food.

The North was not a food producing region. On top of that, the

large-scale war caused an even greater food consumption. Oliseh was leading a cavalry of eight hundred and was responsible for transporting the supplies to Kaka City in the North.

Kaka City was the Northern war zone supply station. All supplies from various places in the Empire were transported to Kaka City before the supplies were redistributed to the various armies. That place was one of Oliseh's destinations.

At first, Oliseh hoped he would be sent to fight on the battlefield, but then he was only dispatched as a transport soldier. Naturally, that made him very depressed. However, when he looked at his new armor and uniform, he finally smiled.

That was the new Lightning God's Whip's standard uniform... armor, horse, spear and most importantly, a scimitar. In the Empire, the only group that used scimitars was the Lightning God's Whip. He was wearing that armor and equipment. For so many days, all along the way here, whenever he encountered soldiers from the other armies and also civilians, they would look at him with respect and envy. After all, the Lightning God's Whip was the army of His Excellency the Duke of the Tulip Family.

As the Lightning God's Whip had gone through a massive reorganization before the war started, fifty thousand active soldiers were brought to the North by the Duke while the expansion of the army continued in the rear.

As he was transferred from the local garrison, Oliseh was pre-selected as the first batch of frontline reinforcement soldiers of the Lightning God's Whip. He took eight hundred cavalymen that had just completed training with him. The purpose of the trip was to escort the transport of supplies to Kaka City. From there, they would immediately go to the front line to report to Lightning God's Whip Regiment and join in the fight.

Although Oliseh was excited and wished to rush to the frontline, the carriages of supplies continued to move slowly on the road.

The horses were exhausted. No matter what the drivers did, the carriages continued to move forward slowly.

They had traveled for more than ten days. The more they moved northwards, the more shocking was the news.

Just the day before yesterday, they heard that Thunder City had fallen. Oliseh and the others were very surprised. Thunder City, which was amongst the most solid defensive position of the Empire, had fallen! On top of that, that stronghold was guarded by the troop of soldiers led by the Duke of the Tulip Family.

After receiving the news, that small group of soldiers had a heavy feeling. Since the news had arrived, it would mean that Thunder City had already fallen a few days ago. What should they do now? Where was the main force of His Excellency the Duke, the Lightning God's Whip hiding?

All along the way, besides the eight hundred new Lightning God's Whip soldiers, there were also more than a hundred transport soldiers. As these soldiers moved northwards, they heard more and more news from the North and became more and more frightened. Oliseh who seldom clung to hope started hoping that he could depend on the Lightning God's Whip when something unexpected happened.

One morning, they met a few scouts from the Northern Legion. Oliseh inquired from them and found out that the battle had moved from the northern coastal areas to the inner regions. After capturing Thunder City, the Roland army rested for two days before their main army advanced towards Kaka City. It was as if the Roland army intended to capture Kaka City, with its huge storage of supplies, in one strike. Meanwhile, the main army of the Duke of the Tulip Family was on the road, arranging several lines of defense to block the progress of the Roland army.

After a few days of big and small battles, the armies from both sides were assembled on the Pamir Plains, a few hundred miles

from Kaka City. It looked like a major battle was about to occur there.

As they approached the front line, Oliseh gave the order for the soldiers to be on alert. Although he was originally only a commanding officer of a small local calvary, amongst the new recruits, he was the most outstanding one. Besides that, he was actually the current commanding officer for these eight hundred soldiers.

A cavalryman rushed towards Oliseh and spoke in a soft voice, "Your Excellency, there are many corpses in front!"

"Corpses?" Oliseh narrowed his eyes.

Sure enough, a few hours later, many corpses were found on the lowlying ground, in front.

The scene before them was like a slaughter house and there were bodies everywhere. Broken weapons were also scattered around the place. Based on their clothing, some of them belonged to the soldiers of the Empire. However, most of it belonged to soldiers of the Roland army. The ground was scorched and there were signs of a burning of the ground. There were many charred bodies and some destroyed carriages on the roadside. Although most parts of the carriages were burned, there were still some things left behind. With a glance, Oliseh saw that those things were food. A partially burned banner was still attached to the carriage. Although the pattern on the banner had been blackened by soot, the vague design of the Roland banner was still visible.

"Your Excellency, this looks like a small supplies team of the Roland army. It looks like they were ambushed by our people!" A cavalryman beside him whispered.

Oliseh nodded and immediately ordered, "It seems like there are signs of activity from the Roland army in the vicinity. Everybody, be careful. Be on guard! From now onwards, dispatch twice as many scouts. Work hard, brothers. Once we reach Kaka City, I will

treat you all to a drink!"

"Yes!"

After passing by the tragic scene, the group continued to move slowly forward. However, after walking for a few miles, they found an even bigger battlefield.

They have arrived in an open field with thousands of dead bodies.

The army of the Empire had clashed with the soldiers of the Roland army there. There were corpses with arrows and also bodies that were split into two. Besides that, there were also dead horses.

Based on the amount of blood, the variety of postures of the corpses and the broken weapons, there was a tragic battle at that location. However, it still looked like the Empire had the advantage as about 70% of the corpses were the Roland army.

"[Looks like an encounter battle.](#)" Oliseh frowned. There was also a deep pit on the ground exploded by either some kind of sorcery or magic spell and it was still sizzling with smoke.

The captain of the transport soldiers was a veteran. He could not help but approach Oliseh and whispered, "Your Excellency, could it be that our people that ambushed those supplies carriages earlier, encountered the Roland army's main force here? It looks like there was a big fight."

Oliseh thought to himself for a moment. He then frowned and said, "We have to hurry up. We seem to be close to the frontline and there is a possibility of more activities by the Roland army. If we encounter our enemy, it would be unfavorable to us!"

A cavalryman proudly said, "Your Excellency, even if we encounter the enemy, they would probably just have a small army. By virtue of the eight hundred Lightning God's Whip soldiers here, even if they attack with over one thousand soldiers, we will not be

afraid!"

Oliseh glared and reprimanded him, "Nonsense! Our mission is to escort these supplies to Kaka City. We are certainly not afraid of encountering a small troop of enemy soldiers. However, if we were entangled by them, our convoy cannot move fast. What will happen if a big enemy troop run into us?"

Oliseh thought for a moment and then asked, "How far are we from Kaka City?"

The leader of the transport soldiers said, "If you go in this direction, without any interference, we would still need another three days."

Oliseh turned gloomy and muttered, "Let's hope the journey is smooth."

He ordered the cavalrymen to form into a few groups of ten. Some walked in the front and some at both sides of the rest of the team. All of the soldiers were on alert. For all these soldiers, whether the transport team or the Lightning God's Whip, it was their first time witnessing such a large-scale war. They had never fought on the battlefield but had already seen two such tragic scenes. These were already mentally very disturbing.

In the night, they arrived at a short hill slope. Oliseh looked at the sky and whispered, "Let us take a break here. The carriages have been moving for the entire day and the horses are tired."

Everyone knew that they were near the front line and there might be small units of military active around the area. If they meet their own people, then there would be no problem. However, if they meet their enemy, things would turn troublesome. That was why Oliseh gave the order not to set up a fire and just sleep in the open air.

In the middle of the night, when Oliseh was feeling sleepy, a cavalryman whispered to him, "Your Excellency, something is not

right!"

Oliseh turned over, sword in hand, and stood up. With his back bent, he rushed towards the soldier, who was acting as the night watchman. He then asked, "What's wrong?"

"Your Excellency, listen..." The soldier lied down and put his ear to the ground.

Oliseh also lied down on the ground and immediately heard a faint sound. He then stood up and said, "Sounds like it is coming from the right."

The soldier then replied, "Yes, it sounds like a cavalry but we do not know if they are Roland men or ours."

"Wake everybody up and prepare a defensive formation!"

All the soldiers were awakened. The Lightning God's Whip was elite and truly worthy of the name. Even though they were awakened in the middle of the night, they were immediately alert and vigilant. They readied themselves in a tense but orderly manner. On the other hand, the transport soldiers differ a lot. Some of them fluttered around and some could not even find their weapons.

Under the dim moonlight, Oliseh and a few of his men climbed on the short hill slope to look. They could hear the sound of hooves and sure enough, a large troop of armed soldiers appeared on the right of the plain. With the moonlight, they could vaguely see flashes from the silver armors of the enemy soldiers. Oliseh said coldly, "A group of idiots. They are marching at night but they do not know how to hide their whereabouts. They wore such bright armors. Do they think we are all blind?"

A cavalryman beside him said, "Yes, look at them. They do not even know how to dampen the sound of the horses' hooves with cloth. With such a big move, aren't they afraid that they meet us? They are definitely not our people. Our people cannot be so

incompetent!"

Although they said all that, as the enemy got nearer Oliseh and his men were startled. It looked like their enemy had about three to four thousand soldiers.

But Oliseh was not afraid of them. Even if he were to encounter a few thousand enemy soldiers, with his eight hundred Lightning God's Whip, he would be able to break through. However, his current mission was to escort the supply team.

As the other side got closer and closer, he finally could clearly see that the armors, equipment, and banners were familiar. He had seen them before that day. They looked similar to those used by the Roland army who died earlier.

All of them lied down and held their breath. Although Oliseh felt agitated and wanted to head out and fight, he didn't. He had confidence in his eight hundred Lightning God's Whip. Even if he were confronted by these three to four thousand soldiers, he would not be afraid. Even if they could not win, they would be able to retreat. However, the transport team was behind him. When faced with the enemy, the transport team did not have the speed of the calvary.

Oliseh saw the enemy soldiers getting closer. However, when the enemy soldiers were about two hundred meters away from them, the enemy soldiers turned eastwards. The enemy soldiers did not seem to have noticed them. Oliseh secretly sighed in relief.

However, his happiness was short lived.

"Sorcerers!" One soldier suddenly pulled Oliseh.

Sure enough, there were two sorcerers floating in the sky. As they were too far away and clothed in black robes, it was difficult to see them in the night sky. The moment they got nearer, the two sorcerers could be clearly seen.

At the same time that Oliseh and the others saw the sorcerers,

the sorcerers saw them too from the sky.

Without any hesitation, the sorcerers each quickly formed a ball of red light and immediately threw the fireballs at them.

"Damn!" Oliseh cursed. At that time, it was already impossible to go back into hiding. He could only jump out and raised his sword to block the fireball.

The fireball had exploded at his sword and sparks flew. His body was abruptly thrown several meters away. Fortunately, the enemy sorcerer was not a high-ranked sorcerer and was quite ordinary. That fireball, which was hurriedly thrown, was not very powerful. Oliseh only felt startled. Although his hair was singed by the sparks, he did not suffer any other injuries.

"Shoot the arrows!" Oliseh shouted from the ground as he tried to get up.

The Lightning God's Whip was already prepared and immediately shot a few hundred arrows into the air. That sorcerer had gotten too close and did not have enough time to move back. He was immediately struck by a few arrows before falling from the sky.

The remaining arrows fell into the enemy's military formation. As the sorcerer had shot a fireball earlier, the Roland army was already aware of them and many of the Roland soldiers had lifted their shields. As a result, the volley of arrows by Oliseh's men did not yield heavy casualties. There were miserable cries and only less than a hundred men were killed by the arrows.

Oliseh finally got up from the ground. Seeing that the enemy soldiers were shot by their arrows, he immediately shouted, "All the soldiers in the front, raise your shields! They are going to shoot their arrows!"

The Lightning God's Whip had all gone through rigorous training. Although these soldiers were new recruits, they

immediately acted accordingly as soon as they heard the order.

After that, they heard a whizzing sound. Sure enough, numerous arrows were shot over from the other side.

A battle where opposing sides made no preparation. It is something like two armies enter the woods and ended up accidentally encountering each other.

Chapter 185: Rody Appears

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Several soldiers hid behind the shields. However, they had assumed the wrong posture and were thus struck by the arrows. Oliseh angrily shouted, "You fools! Pay attention to your postures! Have you forgotten your training? Damn it! Counter attack! Shoot them with arrows!"

The soldiers calmed down when they heard his orders. They responded promptly with their conditioned reflexes which were achieved through rigorous training. It had almost become their subconscious habit.

The Roland soldiers they were fighting were not part of the main army. Instead, they were a low-ranked auxiliary troop of the Gordon Kingdom. This group had been dispatched to look for food and their archers were not very skillful. They had shot the first volley wildly in the dark and managed to hit a few soldiers. Before they could shoot the second volley, the Empire's soldiers had started to return fire.

How was the archery of the Lightning God's Whip? The soldiers selected to be part of the Lightning God's Whip were all excellent soldiers. Whether it was horsemanship, wrestling, or archery, they were incomparable. Under certain situations, the cavalry could instantly transform into mounted archers with fantastic accuracy. Right now, these soldiers were not on horses. Instead, they were on solid ground. Naturally, their accuracy would be even better.

Although the Lightning God's Whip was outnumbered several times by the enemy, there were very few archers in the Roland army; they had only two teams, totaling 300 archers. On the other hand, each and every one of the Lightning God's Whip was a qualified archer. They were elites that could switch instantly their scimitars for their bows with a single order.

Screams pierced the dark as the arrows found their marks on the Roland archers! Half of the several hundred archers collapsed within a moment!

The remaining sorcerer tried to secretly approach the Empire's soldiers from the sky. However, Oliseh saw him and immediately shot an arrow at him. Fortunately for him, the sorcerer had some skills and avoided the arrow by flying higher. He had avoided the same fate as the other sorcerer.

After avoiding the arrow, the sorcerer became furious. He shot two fireballs from both of his hands. The two fireballs whistled through the air towards the slope of the small hill.

The Lightning God's Whip was not the least worried. One officer shouted, "The shields!" The soldiers then raised their shields, holding it above their heads at the same time.

The two fireballs hit the shields, causing sparks to fly everywhere. However, the shields that were wrapped in protective cowhide were not destroyed.

The sorcerer was just an ordinary sorcerer of an auxiliary troop. His skill was only just average. He painstakingly stayed just out of range because he was afraid of being struck by the arrows. The two magic fireballs were actually quite powerful. However, its power had greatly diminished by the time it reached the hill.

"Shit..." Oliseh cursed and picked up two arrows. He then nocked an arrow, pulled the bow string and released the arrow at the sorcerer.

Oliseh was already a Grade 3 swordsman and he could naturally shoot further compared to ordinary soldiers. That sorcerer in midair was about to start a new spell again when he saw a cold gleam in front and hurriedly dodged. The arrow whizzed past his head, causing him to perspire cold sweat.

After that narrow escape, the sorcerer screamed furiously. "Who

was that bastard who shot that arrow? Watch me burn you alive!"

The moment he finished speaking, he heard a 'whoosh' sound in the wind. This time, there was no gleam to warn him. He just heard a strange sound and felt a sharp pain in his chest as the arrow struck him. He could not understand even when he died. He had been more alert than earlier and yet he could not even see the arrow before being hit.

Oliseh spat as he put down the bow and arrow. He then picked up his scimitar and muttered, "Fortunately, I learned this from Darke. Otherwise, I would not be able to get rid of that sorcerer."

Oliseh admired Darke's archery and had asked Darke for advice during that time they spent together. Among others, Darke had then taught him how to shoot a hidden arrow like the second one he had shot earlier.

The hidden arrow was most suitable for use at night. It was executed by using an arrow painted in black. When it was shot at night, it would not be easily detected. Besides that, the arrow had a unique shape that reduced the sound made when the arrow flew through the air. It was a hidden and 'silent' arrow. Used in the night, naturally, it would be hard for an ordinary enemy to avoid it.

The Roland army down the hill had fallen into confusion. They had lost half of their archers. The remaining archers stumbled frantically to the back as the two groups of infantries rushed up the hill slope.

Oliseh took a look at them and sneered, "A group of trash!" Leaving behind two hundred Lightning God's Whip cavalrymen and one hundred supply soldiers on the slope, he led the rest of his army down the hill and started shooting arrows.

Sure enough, the Roland soldiers who were rushing up the hill were struck with arrows. In the dark, they could only hear the screams. However, they could not tell the number of soldiers killed

by the arrows. The Roland army soldiers were not elites. When they heard the miserable screams of their companions, they started to panic and called for a retreat.

The Roland army's officer became angry and ordered his men to continue, forcing them to advance. He also saw that the hill was very small and immediately thought of taking soldiers around it to attack from behind. He ordered his Deputy Commander to remain there and supervise the battle while he took a group of soldiers with him around the back of the hill.

The Deputy Commander was quite cautious. He realized that the enemy only shot a few hundred arrows in each volley and realized that the enemy army was just a small unit. No doubt the arrows were deadly, but how many arrows could they have? After a few volleys, the enemy would have exhausted their supply of arrows. He executed a few men who were too frightened to move ahead, then harshly ordered the rest of them to advance. Unfortunately, he was wrong. His opponents this time were the Empire's supply units. They had a dozen carriages filled with military supplies. They certainly had more than enough weapons and arrows.

Their commanding officer's harsh orders made the Roland soldiers feel helpless. They could only try and rush up the hill even when they felt afraid. They then screamed miserably when another volley of arrows rained down on them. Those who were hit fell and rolled down the hill. These soldiers were not brave elites. They just feared their officer. They then started to shout, "Charge! Kill!" Their shouts were impressive but most of them deliberately slowed down. They took one step back for every two or three steps they took forward, hoping that others would run in front of them.

Naturally, not all of the Roland soldiers were cowardly. There were still a few brave soldiers. Unfortunately, these soldiers were not too smart. The moment they heard their companions shout bravely, they rushed forward. They then noticed that there was

nobody else around them. Their companions all shouted excitedly but stayed right where they were. The brave ones who rushed foolishly ahead found themselves on their own. Before they could get angry, they were shot down by the soldiers of the Empire. The pitiful Roland soldiers angrily condemned their companions before dying. Damn it! You played me!

As he had already seen the results of the shocking battles earlier, Oliseh had been vigilant and had earlier decided to camp on the small hill. The carriages were arranged in a circle to form a defensive barricade with an opening in the middle.

The Roland cavalry had gone around the hill. They intended to attack their enemies from the back but they were surprised to see a dozen carriages arranged in an ingenious defensive formation.

The carriages were a few meters tall. As a result, the Roland horses were unable to jump over the carriages. The cavalymen had no choice but to rush through the gap at the middle of the ring.

However, when they were just a few paces away from the gap, a volley of arrows was shot at them. The leading dozen cavalymen immediately fell off their horses. Their companions behind them who were charging forward ended up stumbling because of them. The Roland officer shouted, "Do not be afraid! They do not have many archers!"

The cavalymen would naturally be more elite compared to infantries. They understood that after a volley, the archers would need time to draw another arrow. If they could take advantage of that moment, they would be able to rush past the gap. As they have a lot of people, they would be able to defeat the supply units.

The men charged forward but then their enemies did not shoot any more arrows. Instead, the cavalymen heard the terrifying words... In the past few days, they have heard these words many times from the fights between the Empire army and the Roland

army. Every time they heard these words, a fierce and ruthless army would appear.

The voices roared in the dark. "Wolf Fang!"

Hundreds of voices had shouted as one, creating an imposing atmosphere as if it was shouted by ten thousand soldiers. "Kill!"

The thundering of hooves could be heard as they saw their enemies charged out of the gap in an angry wave.

"It's the Wolf Fang!"

"My God!"

"Sh*t! Run!"

Before they could understand anything, they had instinctively turned their horses around and scattered into different directions.

Wolf Fang! Sh*t! Our opponents this time are the Wolf Fangs! These Roland troops were just a ragtag group; none of them had personally fought against the Wolf Fangs. However, they had seen enough in the past few days — the Wolf Fangs were the elites even among the Lightning God's Whip. Only the Holy Knights were able to fight against this extremely powerful cavalry. Unfortunately, they were not able to understand how the ordinary supply soldiers suddenly became the Empire's most elite cavalry. What they did not know was that although these soldiers were really part of the Wolf Fang, they were all new to the battlefield and have not even spilled blood before, unlike the truly elitist veteran Wolf Fangs that had been baptized by fire at the battle fronts.

Without waiting for orders from their superior, the Roland cavalry that had been charging forward immediately scattered.

Oliseh took the lead and brandished his scimitar. A cavalryman nearest him was cut down. Oliseh felt his scimitar cutting through the gaps of the victim's armor. He had the strange feeling of his sword cutting into the muscles and bones of his enemy.

Warm blood sprayed on his face. Oliseh felt his chest burn as if a fire had been lit in his heart. He continued to roar as he led the few hundred cavalrymen in attacking thousands of the enemy cavalrymen.

The Roland officer had not given up even though his subordinates had retreated. Although he was surprised that the supply units were the Lightning God's Whip, he immediately realized that his opponents only had a few hundred soldiers. The officer immediately shouted, "They do not have many soldiers! Kill them! Destroy them!"

The officer was brave like a knight but unfortunately, not all of his men were knights. Before their opponents reached them, almost his whole group had already run away. The officer was so angry that he could only rush forward with a few of his subordinates that were still beside him.

These soldiers near him were elites and some of them were real knights. The officer only had one thought. The enemy did not have many soldiers. On the other hand, we have a lot of soldiers! With our numbers advantage, it might be possible for us to compete with them. If we can defeat them, we can end the myth that the Lightning God's Whip is undefeatable! Besides that, we also have soldiers on the other side of this hill. Perhaps they have already charged up the hill. As long as we execute a pincer attack..."

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! The clashing sounds of swords filled the air. The cavalrymen in the front had met their enemies. However, the ones that screamed and fell off their horses were mostly the Roland army's side. The cavalrymen of the Lightning God's Whip were much more powerful than the cavalrymen from the Roland army in terms of skills and also personal strength. Even the Lightning God's Whip charge was more accurate and had more momentum. After that, the Roland Army frontline started to crumble.

Oliseh took the lead and continued to slash right and left with his

scimitar. Nobody could block him and he felt really great. Oliseh was exhilarated. How would the third rate guards of his former local garrison have the chance to kill so many enemies? Where would you be able to find such valiant subordinates there?

Oliseh's eyes were sharp. He spotted what looked like an officer amongst the Roland army. He roared loudly as he brandished his scimitar and rushed towards the officer. The Roland officer suddenly heard a roar and saw a blood covered person from the Lightning God's Whip rushing towards him. He could faintly see that the man was wearing the armor of a military officer. The frightening thing was that the man was not only covered in blood. Pieces of meat were also stuck on the man's armor as if he was a ferocious butcher.

While the Roland army officer felt surprised, Oliseh had already reached in front of him. Oliseh slashed in a circular arc. The Roland army's officer instinctively raised his sword to block. The sound of the swords colliding could be heard and Oliseh's slash was fruitless. The Roland army's officer was also quite strong. After all, a commander of two to three thousand soldiers should be quite skillful. If he were to be compared with a Grade 3 swordsman that had just been selected for the Lightning God's Whip, a newbie like Oliseh, the knight should be stronger. But he was not strong enough. Oliseh's fierce chops and slashes managed to push him back ...

Oliseh shouted again and again as if he was a ghost calling out at night. As if muddled, the Roland army officer only knew how to block. Suddenly he realized that all of his subordinates had already been cut down. He then cried out in alarm and knocked back Oliseh's sword. After that, he turned his horse around and ran. He immediately left behind his pride as a knight and ran away in the face of the demon.

The pitiful ones were his soldiers that had were in disarray. The Lightning God's Whip soldiers were like wolves that have caught a

sheep...

When Oliseh saw his opponent retreating after fighting with him, as well as the fact that his opponent was also an officer, he was reluctant to let his opponent escape. He whistled and a few of his subordinates followed to chase him down.

The Roland army officer escaped along with less than ten of his subordinates. He heard the horses of his enemies gradually approach. He felt frightened and did not have the time to look back. He desperately took out his sword and slapped the backside of the horse. In fact, Oliseh had only taken about three to five people to pursue. If the Roland officer had boldly turned around and fight, he and his ten subordinates would have been able to defeat Oliseh and the few other soldiers. However, the only thing that crossed his mind then was to escape.

Oliseh had defeated his enemy in this fight, his first battlefield experience. Seeing the opportunity to earn merits in front of him, he would not let it go easily. However, in the charge earlier, he had put down his bow. Otherwise, he would have earlier shot the enemy with an arrow. At the moment, he could only kick the horse hard and glare at the escaping Roland army officer.

The Roland soldiers ran for a while only to hear the hooves of horses coming from the side. There were only about a dozen horses. The Roland army officer thought that it was one of his subordinates that got separated in the fight. He hoped that he could get a few of them to follow him. He hoped that they would be able to help drive away the pursuers. If that was not possible, at the very least they could fight the enemy a little.

When the officer looked up his heart turned cold.

About a dozen strong steeds galloped his way. They were led by a young cavalryman. His long blue hair fluttered and his face had a murderous look.

Besides that, the Roland officer almost fell off his horse when he

saw that the armor of this cavalry was obviously that of the Lightning God's Whip.

What was even more frightening was that these Lightning God's Whip men were different compared to that earlier group — they each wore a black cloak over their armor.

This Roland officer was a commander for thousands of soldiers. After fighting so many battles against the Empire, he had already understood how fearsome the Lightning God's Whip was.

The dozen cavalymen that appeared were wearing the armor of the Lightning God's Whip. In fact, they were the elite Wolf Fangs within the Lightning God's Whip.

It was fine if it was just the Wolf Fang. After all, he had previously fought with them. However, the cloaks that the newcomers wore signified something more. That meant that they were not only part of the Lightning God's Whip or the Wolf Fang. They were the elite personal guards of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

Oliseh saw the dozen or so Empire's cavalymen coming from the left and immediately shouted out to them, "My comrades from over there. Stop them quickly!"

None of those cavalymen that appeared responded to Oliseh's words. If one looked carefully, these dozen men were different from the ordinary Wolf Fang soldiers. They looked somber, cold, frightening and indifferent. Their eyes were devoid of human emotions.

The young man with blue hair moved like lightning and quickly reached the Roland soldiers. He swung his sword in a huge arc ...

The Roland army officer's two subordinates desperately blocked with their swords. Two crisp slashing sounds were heard and two heads flew off before their owners could react.

The blue-haired cavalryman was quick as lightning. He thrust his sword towards the Roland army officer. The officer could only grit

his teeth as he braced himself to ward off the attack.

Oliseh then saw a scene that surprised him. The Roland officer that Oliseh had fought so hard with for a long time earlier that day, could not block the blue-haired cavalryman's attack. Instead, man and sword were cut into two in a shower of blood.

The corpse immediately fell off the horse. The blue-haired cavalryman then bent down gracefully to pick up the officer's torso and cut off the head.

The other cavalrymen also killed off the dozen Roland cavalrymen. This kind of skill was something Oliseh had never seen before.

He took a deep breath and approached the other party. As the battle was over, the other cavalrymen from the Lightning God's Whip had also stopped. Without any orders given, they automatically lined up in a fan-shape by the blue-haired cavalryman's side.

Oliseh and the others arrived in front of these men. The moment he stopped his horse, he felt an intense and oppressive feeling. It was a cold, killing intent, an incomparable gloomy atmosphere. Oliseh and the others burst out in goosebumps.

Oliseh then took a deep breath and asked, "Comrades. Are you all also part of the Wolf Fang?"

The blue-haired cavalryman glanced at Oliseh and looked surprised. However, Oliseh could not see the surprise on the man's face in the dark.

"Yes. We are part of the Wolf Fang," The young cavalryman replied lightly. His aura was different from his men. He replied with a gentle but slightly proud voice.

Oliseh immediately had a strange feeling. This person's voice sounds familiar.

"We are the reserve army of the Lightning God's Whip that came

from the Imperial Capital. We were ordered to go to the front and join up with the Wolf Fang army." Oliseh said excitedly as the real Wolf Fang soldiers were in front of him. He understood that these people were different from rookies like him. They were warriors that had seen real battles on the battlefield.

The young cavalryman then smiled and lightly asked, "In that case, what is your rank?"

Even though the person who asked the question was dressed like an ordinary cavalryman Oliseh felt as if the question was being asked by a high-ranking officer. He immediately sat straight and gave the Wolf Fang's standard military salute before loudly reporting, "Grade 3 swordsman and the Captain of the First Cavalry, of the Wolf Fang reserve soldiers, Oliseh, reporting, Sir!"

Oliseh paused and then continued. "We were ordered to escort the transport of supplies from the Imperial Capital to Kaka City. Tonight, we encountered a small Roland army and we have just defeated them. Right now, we are about to regroup and continue our journey!"

"Good." The long blue-haired cavalryman smiled faintly and then said, "Captain Oliseh. We are the Duke of the Tulip Family's personal guards. Since we have met you, you no longer need to go to Kaka City. The Duke ordered for all the supplies to be sent directly to the Lightning God's Whip's barracks a hundred miles in from here."

"Ah... Yes!" Oliseh replied instinctively. Even he himself thought it was strange. He had a strange feeling even though the person he was talking to looked just like a normal cavalryman. The man spoke in a very dignified manner. The man's words were neither gentle nor fierce. However, it was as if that his words must not be questioned. It was like a calm order of a superior officer. This man was just the bodyguard of the Duke but he seemed to be accustomed to being a commander or a general. Hmmm. He must have turned out like this after working close to the Duke for a long

time.

After that, Oliseh subconsciously sized up this blue-haired youth. He could not help but compare the Duke of the Tulip Family and the young man in front of him.

Although he had never met the Duke, the legendary Duke was said to be a blonde and handsome man. God had given him a charming face like the Sun God and an extremely powerful body like Achilles...

This person had a strange and imposing appearance. It was rare for a person to have blue hair. He must be very powerful. The person I took such a long time to fight must have been a Roland knight. I, as a Grade 3 swordsman was unable to defeat him. However, the blue-haired warrior killed him with one stroke of his sword. It was like he was trampling on ants. His cavalrymen were also strange. They had a cold and murderous look — but yet they looked as if they were lifeless.

The blue-haired man nodded his head in acknowledgment. Oliseh turned his horse around and was about to leave. But he then decided to ask, "May I ask for your name? Tonight, you have helped us to behead the Roland army officer. I will report your contribution."

The blue-haired man stopped for a moment. He then turned and laughed. He looked hesitant as he said softly, "I am the Deputy Captain of the Duke's bodyguards. I am a Grade 5 Swordsman."

A Grade 5 swordsman was so powerful? Oliseh was surprised. A Grade 3 swordsman like me is having trouble to defeat the enemy but a Grade 5 swordsman can defeat them so easily? Although Oliseh was from a local garrison and had never met a Grade 5 swordsman in his life, he could not believe a Grade 5 swordsman was so powerful.

The only other explanation must be because these people were the guards of the Duke. Are all of the guards this powerful? The

other enemies were also finished off by the other guards with one strike. The other soldiers that had followed that Roland officer as they ran away were also excellent fighters. But they were also just like a piece of paper to these guards.

"Wait!" Oliseh looked at the other group who were leaving and could not help but call out again.

"Hmm?" That man frowned and asked Oliseh. "Is there something else?"

Although that man had only frowned and only glanced at him, Oliseh felt a strange oppressive aura. It was definitely not the aura of an ordinary cavalryman. It was the aura of a successful person. Although it was just a frown, and his face was lowered... Oliseh lowered his gaze and his voice became nervous as he said, "No... It is just, you still have not told me your name! Also, I would like to thank you for your help. Otherwise, we would have had trouble handling these people."

"You do not need to thank me." The young man finally smiled. He hesitated for a while and then replied, "My name... is Rody."

Chapter 186: Field Operations (1)

"Is this where we will fight the decisive battle?" Tiger looked at the line of strong defense that was ten miles long. Beyond the line of defense was what looked like endless lines of the barracks of the Empire's army. His face was somber, with a tinge of suspicion.

Right then, the doubt in Tiger's heart had persisted.

He was baffled when he captured Thunder City. The Duke gave up Thunder City just like that? Why did he give up that strategic point that blocked the passage of the Southern Expedition? After defending it for so many days, he just took his fierce army and withdrew from the military fortress that he had defended so steadfastly.

On the day the city was captured, Tiger had watched the Empire's Flame Warriors fight to the last man. Although these people were heathens, he had to admit that they were brave and faithful to their own religion. In the eyes of the Roland people, these people believed in the Devil.

The thirty thousand Flame Warriors were sacrificed without hesitation by the Duke. This was to facilitate the Duke's main army's safe retreat.

Thirty thousand Flame Warriors resisted for one and a half day. They had fought against wave after wave of Roland attacks until the Holy Knights finally successfully broke into Thunder City. At that time, Tiger was so moved he almost cried — he had already lost more than one hundred thousand soldiers trying to capture Thunder City.

However, when he entered the city he knew that something was wrong.

The Duke's main army had already retreated. Only the Flame Warriors were left in the city. Even though they fought bravely to

the end, they only had thirty thousand soldiers while they were fighting one hundred thousand soldiers. This was equivalent to a massacre.

The Duke of the Tulip Family had been very thorough. Thunder City was in ruins. Most of the buildings in the city had been demolished. The stones were then used as weapons for resisting the earlier Roland attacks, mostly for smashing into the Roland soldiers' heads.

Besides that, all supplies had already been removed by the Duke's army. Food and weapons ... Whatever that could not be moved or could not be moved away in time were all destroyed. Tiger did not know whether to laugh or to cry when he looked around the city and saw the broken wooden catapults.

Besides that, many places in the city were burning fiercely. There are even a few surviving Flame Warriors desperately resisting at some corners of the city.

Even though Tiger had doubts, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Regardless of whether the Duke deliberately retreated or he retreated after being exhausted from defending, Thunder City was finally captured. The gateway to subjugate the South has been secured. No matter what, the people of Roland will not stop this conquest!

After spending two days to repair Thunder City, Tiger gave the order to head south.

Tiger was cautious and dispatched twenty thousand soldiers as the vanguard of the main army behind them. The twenty-thousand strong vanguard searched the areas around them but they could not find any sign of the enemy. All along the way to the south, they searched the towns and the villages and yet they could not find anybody.

What was going on? Tiger's pre-war intelligence said that the

Northern provinces of the Empire had infertile land and a sparse population. They were just utilized as a war zone.

But, however sparse the population, there should still be some people around!

The Roland army soldiers were at a loss when they entered the empty towns and villages. There was no one to vent their anger, to release their pent-up murderous rage.

They were all ready to teach the heathens a lesson. They understood the decree of the Temple. The Temple and the dozen kingdoms from the Roland continent had made a joint announcement. Brave men that joined the crusade against the heathens of the Radiant Empire will have a share of land, property, and slaves.

Although this was not consistent with the Knight's Spirit and was more like banditry, the crusade needed a lot of manpower and military power. Besides that, the enemies were sinful heathens that had rebelled against God. As a result, they conveniently ignored this issue.

However, as the soldiers continued South, they could not find a single person from the Radiant Empire.

Naturally, it was not as if totally nothing was left. The heathens of the Radiant Empire had left behind their homes and their belongings such as gold and jewelry. The officers and soldiers were thus very excited as they had still earned a lot.

Who was the one who said that the Northern provinces of the Radiant Empire were poor? These heathens were quite rich!

Many officers and soldiers have already earned a fortune and started daydreaming of becoming millionaires. At the end of this war, I can use this money to buy a good piece of land and build a small house. It would be even better if I can get a few beautiful heathen maids...

However, the people of the Radiant Empire did not leave behind any food. None at all.

In the infertile lands of the northern provinces, the scant crops had already been harvested. The remaining unharvested crops had been burned and only scorched earth was left behind.

Faced with this situation, a thought crossed Tiger's mind: strengthening the defenses and scorch the earth!

Tiger now understood the situation he was in.

He took tens of thousands of soldiers to the south. The food consumption of the soldiers and the horses were not just huge but alarming and scary. As Thunder City was near the ocean, supply replenishment was not a problem as they could rely on the ocean. All of their supplies could be continually sent from their ships in the ocean. The Radiant Empire soldiers would not be able to rob them of their ocean fleets.

However, the situation now was different. They were deep in the enemy territory. They were also unable to bring their strong warships to land and support their soldiers. All their supplies can only be transported to Thunder City before it can be transported to the south by their army.

Their journey towards the south was unusually smooth. Their two groups of ten thousand soldiers did not encounter any significant resistance. Occasionally, they encountered some garrison soldiers. These were easily repelled, but some others voluntarily retreated the moment they saw the Roland army.

It seemed that the rumors of the Empire army becoming complacent were true. They were no longer a huge and elite army. The army may still be large, but no longer elite. Naturally, the Lightning God's Whip and the Northern Legion may be exceptions.

At the very least, our army here holds the advantage. The Northwest Legion is currently being held back by our ally

Reuenthal. The Southern Legion also needs to guard the Imperial Capital from the South. The Northern Legion and the Lightning God's Whip, combined, have fewer soldiers than us. Now, all we need is an opportunity.

We just need a chance for a decisive battle! If we can just defeat the Duke's main army in one fell swoop...

After they arrived on the Pamir Plateau, the Roland army stopped.

They were surprised to see the scene in front of them. On the flat terrain of the Pamir Plateau, a large barracks that was ten miles long could be seen.

How did these heathens do it?

The huge barracks was large enough to accommodate three hundred thousand soldiers. The entire barracks was fenced with wooden railings, with a deep trench in front. The trench was ten miles long and on the outside, there were densely packed cheval de frise. This was for blocking the advance of the Roland knight's armored cavalry.

It was no longer a barracks but a sturdy line of defense. He looked at the walls of the barracks, the deep trench, the daggers fixed downwards on the cheval de frise and also the archers in the barracks. Tiger could not help but sigh and wondered how many corpses it would take to fill up the trenches. It must be a lot... a lot...

However, Tiger still sighed with relief as he had found the enemy's main army. Previously, their pace when traveling towards the South was so smooth that it was disturbing. Right now, there may be a solid line of defense in front of him, one that is really vexing, but finally, a real battle could begin.

Hmph. Can the defenses of their barracks be as strong as their defenses of Thunder City? To abandon the city walls in favor of a

military barracks on a plain here. I really do not understand the Duke!

The two sides probed each other on the first day and the real battle started on the second day. The Duke did not keep his troops in reserves. Both armies sent tens of thousands of soldiers into the first battle on the Pamir Plateau.

The Empire's army then taught a valuable lesson to the Roland army. That was, even though they had a strong navy, the battles on land still belonged to the Radiant Empire.

More than thirty thousand of the Radiant Empire's heavy infantries formed a phalanx formation to fight against the waves of soldiers from the Roland army. They fought in tandem with the archers and caused heavy losses to the Roland army.

The Royal Knights of the Sauron Kingdom had been given the order to charge. The Royal Knight Regiment Commander hoped that they would be able to sweep away the humiliation of defeat at the Thunder City. The brave Roland knights shouted their slogan, 'Fight for Honor', before rushing towards the heavy armor infantries of the Empire.

They were greeted with spears that were three meters long held up like a dense forest. The first wave of cavalries charged into the spear formation and a lot of people were skewered to death! Besides that, there were others that fell off their horses before they were beheaded by the second line of the Empire's soldiers.

The Royal Knights immediately realized that even if the enemy was not the Lightning God's Whip, they were not as weak as expected. The Empire's soldiers had been going through strict training to fight against the cavalry charges of the knights. The infantries fought properly without retreating or panicking. The soldiers at the front still bravely raised their spears. Their entire formation had stood tightly packed together. Against their wall of spears, those who look at it could feel their head go numb.

Tiger immediately ordered two infantry regiments to attack when he saw that the Royal Knights could not break the enemy's phalanx formation.

Although the cavalry was unable to break through the formation, it had at least caused a certain amount of disorder.

Seen in another way, Tiger did not want the treasured Royal Knights to be exhausted by this kind of battle.

When the sun started to set, both sides ended the close fight. The Radiant Empire had lost ten thousand brave soldiers while the Roland army had lost twenty to thirty thousand soldiers. The battlefield was filled with corpses and broken limbs. The sunset looked stained in blood red.

Tiger sighed as the bright red sun gradually disappeared from the horizon. Each soldier of the Empire was worth two or three of the Roland army soldiers. This fact depressed him.

If they had encountered the Lightning God's Whip, the difference might be even greater. Each soldier from the Lightning God's Whip could probably fight more than four of the Roland army soldiers.

Tiger was at a loss.

If their army was so strong, why did we start a crusade? From where did those people at the Temple get the nerve to start a crusade that they would have no certainty of winning? Are they just relying on the hundreds and thousands of soldiers gathered from the ten different Kingdoms to fight against the powerful Empire?

If... If I had the Lightning God's Whip... Tiger immediately dispelled these thoughts in his mind because it was impossible.

He knew that it would be very costly to support and maintain such a powerful army. The Roland continent had more than a dozen kingdoms. The national strength of each kingdom was limited. None of these countries could afford such a costly army. It

would be impossible to pick out so many brave warriors.

"Perhaps if the Roland continent could be unified, they could rely on the strength of the entire continent to build such an army," Tiger muttered as he shook his head to try and stop thinking about that idea. He then thought again. It is impossible to get such an army as the Lightning God's Whip. The Temple's Holy Knights could barely compete against the Lightning God's Whip. However, the Holy Knights belong to the Temple. The Temple's power on the Roland Continent was huge and every knight that entered the Holy Knights Regiment would receive the highest glory. This was how the Holy Knight gathered the most outstanding strength in the Roland continent.

The Temple in the Roland Continent had imposed various taxes. Its huge financial resources allowed them to build such a powerful cavalry. The Knights were ensured basic necessities, materials and human resources of the highest quality. These benefits were things that none of the kingdoms could match.

Tiger smiled bitterly and stepped back. If the hundreds and thousands of these soldiers were on the same level as the Royal Knights...

Tiger would be confident of defeating the Duke of the Tulip Family only if the hundreds and thousands of his soldiers could at least reach the level of the Royal Knights. After all, they had the advantage of numbers.

However, Tiger again smiled bitterly as he thought of this.

The Royal Knights belonged to the Sauron Kingdom. The Sauron Kingdom controlled almost half of the Roland Continent, both in terms of territory and population. Thus they had the resources to create a cavalry that was second only to the Holy Knights. However, this was their limit as the Sauron Kingdom controlled the Southern provinces of the Roland Continent. The Sauron Kingdom had to spend most of its resources to maintain a strong

Navy. Everybody knew the importance of a strong Navy. After all, without a strong Navy, the heathens of the Radiant Empire would have already crossed the ocean hundreds of years ago.

Just like that, the two sides continued to battle on the Pamir Plateau. There were many fierce fights on the battlefield. Although the Empire's army was of higher quality, the Roland army made up for the difference with its numbers.

That night, both sides had dispatched hundreds of people to clean up the battlefield. It was a moment where both sides had a tacit understanding of a ceasefire. The soldiers would search for wounded soldiers to carry back. They then gathered the corpses together ...

A blaze started at the edge of the battlefield. The corpses gathered there were burnt into ashes.

At that moment, the Roland army was recalling the shocking scene at the battlefield that day.

The Radiant Empire had dispatched their trump card, the Lightning God's Whip, while the Roland army dispatched the Holy Knights. Tens of thousands of horses had charged towards each other, causing the earth to tremble and even the clouds seemed to disperse.

Hundreds and thousands of people had watched the strongest cavalries from both continents clash directly against each other.

The Roland army had high expectations of the Holy Knights. They knew how frightening and powerful the Lightning God's Whip was. They believed that only the Holy Knights would be able to stand against the Lightning God's Whip.

However, the truth once again surprised them.

Perhaps under normal conditions, the Holy Knights may have been able to withstand the assault of the Lightning God's Whip. However, if the army being led by the frightening Duke of the

Tulip Family's banner, the Lightning God's Whip would be able to crush any enemies.

The only person that could compete against the Duke, the Paladin Fielding, was still wounded. As a result, the Holy Knights were led by three other Senior Knights.

Hundreds and thousands of soldiers also witnessed the Duke kill these three Senior Knights on the battlefield. One of these knights died in a particularly tragic manner. The Duke had fiercely killed his horse. The knight then fell off into the stampede of horses. When they cleaned up the battlefield later, they could not find his body as it had been trampled into bits of flesh by the tens and thousands of horses.

"What are we doing here? Did the Temple send us here to die?" Tiger was lost in thought.

Chapter 187: Field Operations (2)

The two large armies were like two beasts that had fought each other for a long time. Both were already exhausted. They breathed heavily as they watched each other with vicious, bloodshot eyes. They gently licked their wounds, while they watched their opponent with vigilant eyes. They looked for an opportunity, ready to rise and deal a fatal blow.

Tiger finally could no longer wait. He dispatched the special troops of the Roland army, the War Chariots.

The War Chariots was a well-known and special type of troop of the Roland Continent. That troop had special characteristics: sturdy and a powerful momentum. The impact from a direct hit would be terrifying especially on the open plains.

Each chariot was made with the special ironwood from the Roland Continent. They were very sturdy and ordinary fireballs could not destroy them. Sharp blades were also fixed on the wheels on both sides of the chariots. When the chariots moved, the wheels would roll and the revolving blades would become as terrible as the whirlwind.

Every chariot was equipped with three specially selected strong warriors. These warriors were selected in accordance with some standard of physique and strength. They wore heavy armors with strong protective capabilities, similar to the armors worn by heavy infantries. One of them would drive the chariot while the other two would fight, one holding an ax and the other a spear. Besides that, they were also equipped with leather shields to protect themselves from arrows during a charge. When they were near their enemies, these warriors would swap the shields for their spear or ax to attack.

Every chariot would be pulled by two excellent warhorses. These warhorses had gone through many layers of selection and were

also rigorously trained. These warhorses were much stronger than ordinary horses but their speed and stamina were slightly lower. The warhorses were also draped with light armors to give them some protection.

This type of troop would be extremely lethal in an open field. The solid carriages were similar to charging fortresses for attacking enemies. They could easily charge through the formation of heavy infantries, while the archers behind those infantries would not be able to do much damage to them.

Just imagine, when the heavy and solid chariot charged at a human body... it was definitely a nightmare!

Although the advantages of the chariot were obvious, its weaknesses were also prominent. That was one of the reasons why Tiger did not dispatch these troops earlier. The other reason was that the chariots were extremely expensive. A chariot unit would be several times more expensive than a knight unit.

The ironwood used to make chariots cost quite a sum of money. The costs of maintenance and repair were also quite alarming. Besides that, the soldiers on the chariots must also be carefully selected. Although it was easy to train an ordinary soldier, it was difficult to train the chariot soldier. They had to undergo several layers of careful selection from the army. The warhorses were also the cream of the crop. Coupled with the cost of weapons and armors, the total cost became extremely huge.

The War Chariots was a special army of Sauron Kingdom. They were unique to the Sauron Kingdom. The other smaller kingdoms of Roland continent did not have the ability to support such an expensive army. They were also unable to select many good soldiers.

Even though the Sauron Kingdom controlled almost half of the national strength of the Roland Continent, they could only form three thousand chariot teams with about ten thousand soldiers.

However, when compared to their fifty thousand Royal Knights, the expenses needed for these ten thousand soldiers were much higher.

"It is time..." As the war drum continued to beat, the two armies assembled at the wilderness. Tiger then said in his heart. Let us see if this team of War Chariots could fight, face to face, with that scary Lightning God's Whip.

Naturally, Tiger did not dare use the War Chariots earlier because that was the Sauron Kingdom's real trump card. King Sauron had spent a lot of money to build up that horrible war machine with the purpose of fighting the Holy Knights on the Roland Continent.

King Sauron had a great ambition. He was naturally dissatisfied that his royal authority was supplanted by the religious authority. The War Chariots was originally meant to be used as the trump card against the Holy Knights of the Temple in the future...

After the loud and clear sound of the military horn, the army of the Radiant Empire began to move slowly.

Before them were the formations of several tens of thousands of the Northern Legion's heavy infantries, followed by two cavalries on both sides... Cavalry? Tiger wrinkled his brow. How come the Lightning God's Whip did not appear?

After an Imperial officer in the camp shouted his command, the phalanx formations of the Radiant Empire's heavy infantries slowly moved forward. The soldiers also shouted loudly in unison as the morning sun shined on their swords and bright armors.

The neat phalanx formations slowly advanced. The sound of the heavy pounding steps, together with the tinkling sounds of their weapons and armors colliding, fiercely hammered into the hearts of the Roland soldiers.

Tiger looked at his enemy and sighed again, "If only I had one

hundred thousand of such elite infantry..."

He then shook his head and thought. Now is a time of war. This inexplicable idea is really meaningless.

He then whispered something. His conveying officer immediately passed down his military orders.

The front row of the battle formation of the Roland army slowly stepped aside, revealing a huge opening. After that there was the loud sound of a horn and, immediately, the sky shook and the earth quaked.

Those who did not personally witness that would never be able to appreciate that kind of shock.

The earth had immediately started to shake the moment the horn was sounded. Thousands of chariots charged forward as if a savage beast had awoken. The sound of horses' painful neighs and the soldiers' high-pitched cries were all mixed together. Although the cries were not grating and ear-piercing, it was sharp enough to make their ears go deaf and their hearts trembled.

The rolling wheels threw earth all over. Leading the billowing earth and dust were thousands of speeding chariots. Although the chariots were still a distance away, the roar of the opponent soldiers was clear and their blood red eyes were evident.

The commanding officers of Radiant Empire immediately realized the danger. They gave the orders and the archers behind the infantries immediately shot a volley of arrows. A huge concentrated volley of arrows ferociously shot towards the charging chariots. However, those on the chariots raised their heavy shields, effectively keeping them safe. Even when the arrows occasionally got past the shields, they did not cause much damage because of the heavy armors.

After a volley of arrows, the chariots had already gotten much closer.

"Get ready!" An officer of the Empire shouted loudly. The soldiers nervously moved forward and gradually closed up. They tried to make their square formation more packed and deeper.

"Get ready!" The officer cried out again and he sounded a little nervous.

The soldiers in front plunged their shields into the ground and then they leaned forwards into them.

"Ready!"

Others raised their spears and extended them through the gaps between the shields. Countless sharp spears were lifted to greet the difficult and dangerous enemy.

Finally, they collided. When the first chariots smashed into the phalanx of infantry, the spears immediately broke from the heavy impact. The shield wall was breached and some of the soldiers were torn apart and scattered on the ground, screaming miserably as they died.

Some of the horses from the first row of chariots were pierced by the spears. However, those mighty horses neighed and dragged the chariots a little bit more before they fell. Just those few steps were already damaging enough.

After getting past the shields and spears, the following chariots cut through the phalanx of the infantry, like a blade cutting through meat.

The axes and spears of the Roland warriors on the chariots; the sharp blades on both wheels of the chariots; the impact of the sturdy chariots as well as the trampling of the horses; were all nightmares to the infantry of the Empire.

The front infantries could not withstand the impact of the charging chariots, while the infantries from both sides were churned apart by the blades on the rolling wheels, even before they could get near the chariots.

Faced with that amazing weapon, the quality of the infantry of the Empire was immediately apparent. If it were the infantry of the Roland army facing such a stunning charge, they would collapse immediately. However, the Northern Legion bravely rushed forward. One after another fell under the rolling wheels of the chariots. They did not retreat. These soldiers would fight to the death and even used their bodies to stop the advancing chariots. Some of the soldiers picked up the broken spears from the ground and, while holding the broken spears, rushed at the wheels of the chariots. The moment they did that, their bodies were diced apart by the blades on the wheels. Several soldiers even rushed towards the front of the chariots at the same time.

The cavalry of the Empire, on both sides, had already started moving. They tried to attack the chariots from two flanks, but Tiger had already prepared the Holy Knights. After a whistle signal, the Holy Knights, who had been waiting for a long time, appeared and split into two groups to intercept the cavalry.

Facts had proven that on the battlefield, those with better weapons could easily procure an advantageous position, within a short time.

That truth was played out on the soldiers of the Empire.

The Northern Legion trained by Milo showed extreme courage and quality. They deserved to be called elites of the Empire's army. For the sake of blocking the chariots, they were willing to pay a heavy price. That was because they knew if the chariots had rushed past them, the archers that were standing behind the infantries would be massacred. The lightly equipped archers, when faced with those horrible weapons of war, would definitely not be able to hold.

The cavalries, on both sides, confronted the Holy Knights. Although the cavalry of the Northern Legion was powerful, they were slightly weaker compared to the Holy Knights of the Roland army. The entire army of the Empire was overwhelmed. When

Tiger saw that, he immediately ordered several of his infantry regiments to rush forward. He wanted to take this opportunity to completely rout those tens of thousands of enemy soldiers and break through the Empire's defensive line.

Milo was depressed as he watched his army massacred. He gritted his teeth and ordered a retreat.

The archers behind were the first to withdraw. One of the walls was pushed over and formed a bridge above the deep trenches. The infantry, in front, used their bodies to block the advances of the enemy, while the infantry, behind, attempted to withdraw.

Fortunately, the chariots had slowed down after getting blocked by the dense formation of infantry. The momentum of the assault had stalled. Although the knights on the chariots were still swinging their weapons at the surrounding soldiers of the Empire, with the piles of bodies on the ground and the sluggish wheels, the chariots were already incapable of bulldozing through.

That gave the soldiers of the Empire valuable time to withdraw.

After seeing the breakthrough of the first line of defense, Milo gritted his teeth and gave another order. "Raise the drawbridge."

Although there were still tens of thousands of infantries left behind and two cavalries desperately fighting against the enemy's knights, the only escape route had already been closed.

The drawbridge was pulled up and the only retreat bridge over the trenches had disappeared.

The soldiers of the Empire saw that the escape route had disappeared but they had no fear or sadness. The remaining soldiers shouted loudly, turned around and viciously glared at their enemy. They roared like a desperate beast as they rushed forward.

The two cavalries of the Empire fought to the end. They did not win their battle against the Holy Knights. However, they did not

tarnish the banner of the Tulip Family that was flying in the barracks.

When the last soldier of the Empire on the battlefield finally fell, the faces of the Roland people were not joyous from the victory. Instead, they showed admiration and fear.

The ground was covered with blood and corpses as if attesting to the existence of a tragic battle here. Some fallen horses which were not dead yet were issuing some soft plaintive whine. Each and every Holy Knight was also covered in blood and could no longer tell if the blood was his own or his enemies'. They had already laid down the swords in their hands. However, when they looked at their fallen enemies, their cold expressions turned into a peculiar look.

That battle was the most tragic battle since the second crusade started. That was the first and last time the War Chariots of the Roland army had demonstrated such terrifying strength. Their special chariots would later be known as the 'Meat Grinder'.

Tiger looked at the opponent's defensive wall re-erected again. The archers' arrows and the magicians' fireballs were all thrown downwards, attacking from the walls. Finally, he sighed and ordered his troops to withdraw.

Although Tiger had won he felt somewhat worried.

Where is the Lightning God's Whip? Why did they not appear today?

Chapter 188: Disguise

The capital of a northern province...

The Roland army fought with the Empire's army for several days on the [Pamir Plains](#) in the Northern province.

Tiger's plans were simple.

Currently, the Pamir Plain was located on the way South. North of the Pamir Plains was the Thunder City. From there, there were two ways to go South. The first method was to defeat the Northern Legion main army. Then go south to capture the northern province capital, Kaka City.

The second method was to make a detour around that strong defense line. Station some ten thousand men to pin their army down here. Then lead his main army south through another passage on the west.

Tiger shook his head. The second method was simply crazy. Detour around them? It would be crazy to lead hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the enemy's territory but avoid a decisive battle.

Tiger sighed as he rubbed his aching temple.

In the past two days, things had not progressed smoothly. After the Roland army won the battle with the chariots, the soldiers of the Empire seemed to behave like turtles and hid behind their solid defenses. They refused to come out. They relied on the deep trenches and solid walls. There were also dozens of miles of defense line. The archers, catapults, and spears hands were hiding inside their barracks. The Coalition Army of the Roland Continent attacked for two days, yet they were unable to create an opening.

What Tiger could not understand was that his soldiers were extremely brave and could fight ferociously even when they were faced with the sturdy Thunder City.

However, the situation had suddenly changed. Apart from the soldiers of Sauron Kingdom who were very disciplined, the soldiers from the other kingdoms were acting strangely. In the past two days, during the aggressive attacks, those soldiers refused to be vanguards. Even when Tiger, in the name of commander, finally gave them a strict order, the commanding officers of those troops pretended to be dead.

The soldiers were even worse. They often stopped after running a few steps forward. They were reluctant to move forward, even if their lives were threatened. Even when faced with the sharp swords of their superiors who were pushing from behind them, they tried to evade or go as slowly as possible.

Occasionally they would charge forward but no longer had faith or the courage to face death. They would casually fight for a while before retreating. The first thing those soldiers would do after retreating would be to rush to the barracks and divide all the spoils of war of the dead soldiers.

Sometimes, in order to snatch a packet of gold, those soldiers who were usually not aggressive in the battlefield, would even attack their own comrades.

Tiger was extremely angry and immediately ordered the execution of a few people. He hanged their heads for others to see. That caused dissatisfaction of the people from a few other kingdoms. They accused Tiger of being selfish and deliberately sent their armies out to die but not the army of the Sauron Kingdom.

Tiger then gritted his teeth and dispatched the infantry of Sauron Kingdom as the main force, to fight the battle for one day. However, he found that the armies from the other kingdoms continued to waste time. Finally, Tiger angrily said, "Just stay in the barracks and count your money! But just think for yourself, if we were to lose the war, would you still be able to spend that money?"

Besides that, Tiger had a concern, which he kept to himself. The Lightning God's Whip has not appeared for a few days. Don't any of you all have any thoughts?

Although Tiger was suspicious, at least up till then, he still had not heard any bad news. In order to prevent any possible schemes by the Radiant Empire, every day Tiger would dispatch thousands of small groups to scout in all directions, especially at his flanks and rear.

At the very least, the report he received two nights ago was reassuring... That night, three thousand soldiers from the Goethe Kingdom were dispatched to scout around. They encountered the opponent's transport team. Both sides fought fiercely. Tiger felt relaxed when the blood-stained deputy officer returned and reported the news to him.

That was because according to the deputy officer, they had encountered the Lightning God's Whip.

The officer and three thousands of the army were killed. The remaining who managed to escape were less than eight hundred. Even their two sorcerers were killed.

Although they lost a few thousand soldiers and two sorcerers, Tiger was not concerned... At the very least, the Lightning God's Whip was still there and had not disappeared to somewhere else.

Tiger repeatedly and carefully asked the deputy officer about the clothing, armors, and equipment of the enemy and their combat effectiveness. Those questions were unnecessary but the answers made Tiger feel reassured. When Tiger looked at the frightened blood-stained deputy officer in front of him, he felt convinced. The only group that could cause the Roland army to end up in such a pitiful state was the Lightning God's Whip.

The actual number of Lightning God's Whip headed by Oliseh was definitely less than two thousand. However, the deputy officer exaggerated that there were two thousand of the Lightning God's

Whip to evade responsibility.

In addition to that, the news Tiger received the night before further reduced his doubts.

The night before, one of the thousands of small troops that he had dispatched also encountered an attack. According to the report by those who returned, they were attacked by the Lightning God's Whip. Three or four thousand of the Lightning God's Whip ambushed them in the Southwest region.

In two consecutive nights, the Southeast and the Southwest had traces of the Lightning God's Whip. Could it be that the Lightning God's Whip is still in the vicinity?

Tiger sighed. What is the Duke of Tulip Family doing? His powerful army is not fighting directly on the battlefield but instead divided into small groups to scout around. Were they specifically sent to fight his search groups?

"Or..." Tiger's eyes lit up.

Or...Could it be that the Empire is short of supplies? The Duke of Tulip Family was worried that the small troops that he dispatched, might attack the transport team of the Empire. So, he sent the Lightning God's Whip to escort the supply team?

Tiger laughed as he thought about that. It was ridiculous.

He then remembered that two nights ago, the deputy officer had mentioned that he personally witnessed the Lightning God's Whip escorting the supply team.

Perhaps, what his opponent transported was not ordinary supplies but some powerful weapons!

With so many doubts, Tiger sighed and walked out of the tent. The evening breeze made his already confused mind clearer. He looked at the defensive line of the Radiant Empire and muttered, "What is the Duke of the Tulip Family doing?"

What is His Excellency the Duke doing? Nobody knew. That was something even Sieg was not sure.

In fact, Sieg was currently stationed at the Pamir Plain, far behind the Roland army.

Sieg and one-half of the Wolf Fang had already set off two days ago. Their destination was Thunder City.

The twenty thousand Wolf Fangs were not wearing the standard armor of the Lightning God's Whip. They were wearing the armors of the Roland knights and holding the cross-swords of the Roland soldiers. More importantly, they were not wearing the ordinary armors of the Roland knights. The special colors of the armors and the black cloaks on their backs indicated their identity... as the supreme Holy Knights of the Temple of the Roland Continent. As for Sieg, he was wearing the actual standard armor of a Senior Knight of the Holy Knight Regiment of the Roland Continent.

The truth was, Sieg was also a little bit puzzled. He was puzzled by His Excellency the Duke, who had been acting strangely recently.

In fact, ever since fighting the Holy Knights at the Pamir Plain, His Excellency the Duke had rarely appeared after returning to the camp.

Sieg and Milo had been speculating whether His Excellency the Duke have been injured.

After fighting for so many days against the Paladin and on so many occasions against the Senior Knights, it would be unusual if His Excellency the Duke had no injuries. Even if he did not have any external injuries, then what about internal injuries?

Others might not know how powerful a Paladin really was. However, Sieg knew. At Thunder City, Sieg had fought Paladin Fielding when that Paladin climbed the city wall. Frankly speaking, Sieg had never doubted his own strength, until then. In

fact, Sieg was about to reach the level of a Grade 5 swordsman. However, when he was confronted by the Paladin, he only managed to defend three strikes. The three strikes almost killed him. Besides that, Sieg could also tell that the Paladin had not used his full strength. If His Excellency the Duke had not appeared in time to assist him, he would have died in Thunder City.

Is His Excellency the Duke really injured? Even if he is, shouldn't he at least tell me? Even if he was afraid that the news might affect the soldier's morale, shouldn't he at least tell a few senior commanders?

His Excellency the Duke had been acting strangely in the barracks a few days ago. His dozen bodyguards stood watch all the time, outside his tent. Besides that, His Excellency the Duke had also given orders that without his permission nobody, including Sieg, was allowed to enter the tent.

Sieg had some doubts. He felt unfamiliar with the dozen bodyguards of His Excellency the Duke, even though some of them were originally members of the Wolf Fang. Sieg certainly could recognize them. However, when he looked at their familiar faces, he had a strange feeling. Those people had changed too much. Although he did not test them out personally, he knew that they were much stronger than before. A warrior's intuition was very accurate.

There were also a few other recruits that Sieg did not recognize. That was not surprising because he was the Duke of the Tulip Family. It was normal for the Duke of the Tulip Family to have a few special guards around him. At each generation, the Duke of the Tulip Family would bring along a few personal guards from their family. One of those examples was Randt. Randt was originally a guard for the Duke's mansion, but now he was also a soldier in the Lightning God's Whip.

A silhouette emerged in Sieg mind.

Yes, that blue-haired boy.

What is the name of that blue-haired boy? Ah, it is Rody. I do not know that boy. He seems to have been dispatched from the mansion of the Duke of Tulip Family. It is normal if I do not know him. After all, there are tens of thousands of soldiers, it is impossible for me to have seen all of them, before. It is also not a big deal if the Duke of the Tulip Family has a few special guards around... But... But, why does that boy give me a strange feeling?

More importantly, His Excellency the Duke only occasionally appeared once a day and spent the rest of his time in the tent. Even if there were anything, he would pass messages through his bodyguards... most of the time, they would pass through this boy, Rody.

There was also his sword. It was obvious that this was His Excellency the Duke's weapon. However, this boy was holding it. Did His Excellency the Duke give it to him?

Who was this boy? He did not look like he had even reached twenty years old. Was he a relative of the Tulip Family?

Meanwhile, Rody was at a place that was about four hours away from where Sieg was. He had more than twenty thousand cavalymen behind him. They were also wearing the armors of the Holy Knights. Their destination was also Thunder City.

Kraft looked at the blue-haired boy and thought to himself.

Kraft was thirty-five years old that year. He was an old soldier of the Lightning God's Whip. However, because of his bad temper, he had always only held the post of a Deputy Commander. The entire army of the Empire knew that the post of a Deputy Commander was just for show. The real power was no better than that of a Captain.

It was after His Excellency the Duke of the Tulip Family had reorganized the Lightning God's Whip that Kraft had a better

opportunity of promotion. By virtue of his own strength, he was promoted to commander. Kraft was a very proud man. When he was with the original Lightning God's Whip, he already did not think highly of those noble officers. He had never followed their bad ways. Besides his arrogance, the other reason was Kraft was not a noble.

Because of that, Kraft had always looked at the nobles with disdain. Naturally, the great Duke of the Tulip Family was an exception.

However, Kraft did not like the blue-haired boy beside him. This kid must have joined the Lightning God's Whip using his influence. How else could such a young man become the deputy captain of the guards of His Excellency the Duke?

It was a known fact that it was extremely glorious to become the bodyguard of His Excellency the Duke. Many captains of cavalries were willing to be demoted from their positions as captains if they could become the bodyguard of His Excellency the Duke. Kraft was certain that the young boy must have somehow used his influence to become the bodyguard of His Excellency the Duke.

Otherwise, why would he be the bodyguard of His Excellency the Duke but dare not transfer himself to a vanguard group such as the Wolf Fang or other cavalry teams?

He is so young. He doesn't seem to be very capable.

However, whether it was Sieg, who was tens of miles away, or Kraft, they were both mindful of their current orders of launching sneak attacks.

They could still clearly remember the time before their departure when His Excellency the Duke had summoned them at the camp.

The Duke's face looked a bit pale, causing others to believe the rumors that His Excellency the Duke might be injured.

Fortunately, His Excellency the Duke still seemed to be spirited.

That night, the large tent was heavily guarded by the bodyguards of His Excellency the Duke. Nobody was allowed to get close. Only Sieg, Milo, and Kraft were allowed to enter.

Originally, Kraft's rank was too low and he was not eligible to participate in that confidential military meeting. Milo was the Regiment Commander of the Northern Legion while Sieg was the Deputy Commander of the Lightning God's Whip. Along with the great Duke himself, the three of them could be considered the three big figures of the war.

That was why Kraft felt very nervous when he attended the secret meeting. He was a large man standing there unsure of what to do.

In the middle of the big tent was a sand table which vaguely showed the current war situation. It showed both armies were facing each other on the Pamir Plateau. There was a red flag inserted into the sand of the war table symbolizing the Radiant Empire. Next to it was a black flag which naturally represented the Roland army.

His Excellency the Duke then inserted two small red flags into the sand plate, at two spots on the other side of the black flag, as he spoke calmly.

"There are two roads that lead to Thunder City. The first road is the main road. When we retreated and when the Roland army moved south, we used this road. The other road is a small road. Although this road is not an easy road to use, it is good enough for a small army to pass through. Your target is Thunder City.

Sieg and Milo looked calm as they already knew the plan. On the other hand, Kraft was extremely surprised. Although he hesitated for a moment, he still said, "Your Excellency the Duke, both Sieg and me only have twenty thousand soldiers each. Can we really win back Thunder City? I heard that the Roland army have hundreds of thousands of soldiers garrisoned at Thunder City.

Also... we are sneaking pass from both sides of Pamir Plain, time wise..."

At that time, His Excellency the Duke had a very firm expression. He lightly looked at Kraft and said, "Commander Kraft, I know that it is a long journey. You all will bypass their barracks from two sides and ride quickly to Thunder City. You must travel day and night. Even the Lightning God's Whip would need about three days of fast riding to reach there. But I must ask you... No, I order you to reach Thunder City in three days."

His Excellency the Duke looked at Kraft and said in a low voice, "When we were in Thunder City, I had the Wolf Fang secretly dig a tunnel for ten days in the south of the city. The tunnel is not too deep nor too wide as there was not enough time, but it is enough to allow one to two thousand soldiers to secretly enter the city. I will give you my bodyguards. My bodyguards will know the way through the tunnel into the city. After that, you will strive to open the gates from inside... And then... Don't tell me that my forty-thousand strong Lightning God's Whip is unable to defeat a hundred thousand disorderly mob."

Kraft immediately stood up straight and shouted, "Your Excellency the Duke, if we cannot recapture Thunder City, I, Kraft, will die there and not come back!"

Kraft wiped the sweat off his face as he felt the wind blow. He looked at Rody, the blue-haired boy beside him and sighed as he thought to himself. His Excellency the Duke said his bodyguards will lead the way. Is this Rody really so powerful? Hmph... Judging by his age, he would be considered good, if he were only half as strong as Randt. Sigh, why did His Excellency the Duke not send Randt, but this boy, instead?

Kraft did not know that at that time Randt was in the Radiant Empire's main camp in the Pamir Plain.

The camp was surrounded by a team of more than ten

bodyguards. Among them was an excited Oliseh. He had just been transferred to the Lightning God's Whip and he had already been selected to join the Duke's bodyguards. Perhaps the bodyguards he met that night had inadvertently told His Excellency the Duke about his heroic acts...

He looked around at his few new comrades and his excitement turned into a strange feeling. He had met these two men that night. They looked lifeless and had a cold icy expression. They would not speak a word unless they were talked to. Even when they spoke, their tone sounded as if their parents had just died. Their occasional gaze made people turn cold. They were like monsters.

However, Randt was having more difficulties than Oliseh.

Randt was ordered to stay in the tent, wearing the Duke's armor, clothes, and helmet. He was ordered to impersonate His Excellency the Duke. Although this order was strange, Randt was loyal to the Duke and did not question him. Since His Excellency the Duke had given the orders, he would just do it. As per His Excellency the Duke's orders, he did not need to think and plan. He only needed to act as instructed. Even if His Excellency the Duke had ordered him to charge into hundreds of thousands of the Roland army alone, he would do it without batting an eye.

The only thing that Randt felt uncomfortable with was that the orders given by His Excellency the Duke were not so simple... Before leaving, he had instructed Randt on three things:

If someone wanted to see the Duke, say "No!"

If someone reported an enemy attack, say "Defend!"

If there were any more questions, tell them to "Go and ask His Excellency Milo."

Another reason Randt felt depressed was that His Excellency the Duke did not mention exactly how long he needed to stay in that

tent with nothing to do. His Excellency the Duke merely told him that he was not allowed to leave the tent, regardless how long. He was also not allowed to speak. He just had to sit and wait until he returned.

Randt did not know Rody's simple reason for choosing him. The reason was Randt had been with him the longest and understood his mannerisms best. More importantly, Randt's rough voice had the dignity of a military general. In addition to that, Rody's voice and Randt's voice sounded similar, when spoken across the tent.

The two divisions of Wolf Fang quickly advanced towards Thunder City. Sieg's journey was particularly dangerous. That was because Tiger had cautiously stationed a lot of soldiers on the road behind him as they traveled south to prevent the Empire's troops from cutting off their escape route.

Sieg actually came across some soldiers who tried to stop his advance, but he handled the situation efficiently.

From a distance, when they saw the Roland army blocking them on the main road, the Wolf Fangs without saying a word, just rushed forward. No matter how the opponent asked or shouted, they continued to advance forward.

When the Roland army saw that the oncoming troops in front were wearing the Roland army's uniforms ... the important point was that from a distance those looked like the armors of the Holy Knights. Even the banner was the Holy Knight's banner — the pattern, the color, and designs clearly proved that this was the genuine Third Cavalry Regiment of the Holy Knights. There could not be any mistake here... The Roland officer in charge could not have made a mistake about the famous Holy Knight's banner. Moreover, they were also marching according to the standard formation of the Holy Knights — two knights holding their banners up high paving the way, the one following from behind in the middle must be the Regiment's Senior Knight, forming an inverted triangle... all those were correct...

What the Roland army did not know was that the Empire had already acquired the information about the Holy Knights such as the different armors for different ranks, the meaning of the pattern inscribed on the banner and even their formations. That information was obtained from the captured knight, Gerta. Rody's method of interrogation was very effective.

After a week of not being allowed to sleep, Gerta's Holy Knight spirit finally collapsed. When he confessed, he had almost become a mad man and could not even form complete sentences. His eyes were red and he was pale like a vampire. If his hands were not tied, he would have pulled out his hair in a crazed state. He spoke incoherently with a face full of tears and snot.

No one had expected for a brave and determined man like him to end up like that after that strange interrogation method.

Finally, the tortured and almost crazy man cried as he begged them to let him sleep. That was because every time he closed his eyes and was about to doze off, all sorts of strange methods would be used to keep him awake. Although the soldiers of the Empire did not physically harm him, the lack of sleep made his head feel like bursting. Perhaps, it was an illusion, but he felt like his head was a large balloon.

Finally, that man had a nervous breakdown. He then answered all the questions the interrogating officer of the Empire asked, before falling asleep and he no longer woke up.

With the information provided by the knight, Rody gave the order and fake Holy Knight armors that looked almost like the real thing were made. The reason why they were only 'almost' like the real armors was because there was not enough time. All the armors were simply modified from the armors of the Lightning God's Whip. If the color was wrong, it was painted over. If the shape was not right, the armor was given to the craftsman to be modified. Even the banners were made according to the banners of the Holy Knights.

These had become a nightmare for the Roland troops guarding the north-bound road.

If a group of soldiers was called from afar and no response was given, the commanding officers of the Roland troops would have already ordered the archers to shoot arrows. However, the army they were facing then were the troops of the Holy Knights... the Holy Knights of the Temple. It would not be an issue to offend soldiers from any of the kingdoms but they could not afford to do so against the Holy Knights. It would be a serious crime even the King could not afford.

Besides that, the Holy Knights were well known for their arrogance on the Roland continent. Not answering the inquiries of others had perhaps become their arrogant habit.

When the opponent finally arrived in front of the Roland troops, and when they were near enough, then only did they notice that something was wrong. The armors were nondescript and the color also looked a bit weird. However, by that time, it was already too late.

There was no army that could withstand the direct assault of the Lightning God's Whip. Besides that, the opponent was already so close and had already crossed the most effective shooting range of the archers.

Sieg's approach was simple. Rush forward without stopping. Charge through the soldiers who blocked the way and after that advance forward, without giving a chance to fight back.

Three days later, they had arrived at the southern part of Thunder City. Like lightning, Sieg led his soldiers to break through the enemy's last line of defense... The officer of the Roland army had waited until they were less than one hundred paces away before he reacted and ordered to shoot the arrows.

...

Sieg looked at the surrounding corpses and the defeated soldiers. He then coldly ordered to leave behind five thousand soldiers.

Sieg did not immediately hurry off. Instead, he got down from his horse and stood in front of the five thousand soldiers. He stayed silent for a moment before speaking. His voice sounded hoarse and soft as a result of a few days of traveling. "Comrades, I want to tell you that I leave you here because I want you to tightly hold this position. I am also not afraid to tell that those left behind here would most likely die! This is why I must tell you that this is not an ordinary task. If you are to remain here, you must be prepared to die!"

Nobody spoke or averted their eyes.

Sieg gritted his teeth and continued, "Very soon, a huge Roland army will arrive. Your task is to guard this place! His Excellency the Duke had given the order to guard this place for at least one day! One full day and not even a minute less than a day. If the time is not up, nobody is allowed to retreat even if you were the last man alive!" Sieg's gloomy eyes slowly swept across the soldiers and shouted, "If you are afraid of death, please stand out! I can forgive those who fear death, but if you cannot fulfill the Duke's orders, I suggest you get lost!"

Nobody hesitated and none of them trembled in fear. The five thousand men stayed in place, neatly drew their scimitars and raised them pointing towards the sky. After that, they shouted in unison, "Wolf Fang!"

The Pamir Plains here was described as the Pamir Plateau in the previous chapter. In any case, the translated text, whether 'plains' or 'plateau', followed the author's actual words.

Chapter 189: Black Veil

The remnants of the defeated Roland army, hundreds of them, dashed wildly towards Thunder City. Many were covered in blood. Some of them ran until they could not run anymore and just sat on the ground. Those that were not injured had thrown away their weapons and armor.

Right then, even close comrades no longer cared about each other. They could only think of getting to Thunder City as fast as possible.

The soldiers were extremely frightened; their legs would have turned soft from fear even if a crow flew over their heads. When frightened, the more timid ones would shout, "They have caught up!"

The scene then became even more interesting. The ones that still had the strength would run faster while the tired ones desperately hanged onto their nearby companions, begging them to help pull them along.

They thus ran helter-skelter for over an hour. Many of them were not heavily injured but were out of breath. Strangely though, the enemy that had been chasing them earlier and who were disguised as Holy Knights, did not attack them immediately...

Sieg did not feel like closing in to kill them. There were many checkpoints along the way and Sieg was too lazy to chase down all these soldiers. His primary objective was to get to Thunder City fast.

As for those Roland soldiers, just let them run!

If they had run towards the Pamir Plain, Sieg would not bother with them at all as his task was to capture Thunder City. It was fine as long as Thunder City was not forewarned. The Roland soldiers running towards the Pamir Plain would be stopped by the

Empire's main army.

On the other hand, it would also be a joke for these soldiers to run towards Thunder City. It was impossible for them to run faster than the Lightning God's Whip. The Lightning God's Whip passed them along the way. When they felt like it they would slash and kill a few; when they were tired they just ignored them. The lucky ones were left dumbstruck because the Empire soldiers, after having caught up with them, not only ignored them but continued their rush to the north.

One of the Roland soldiers could not help but ask, "Are these guys here to kill us or race with us?"

Sieg had not attacked this last group of soldiers. He was not lazy; he just did not need to.

Besides that, these hundreds of soldiers had been running for an hour. The troops that were in formation earlier had spread out in disorder for one hundred meters. Those who still had the strength were in front while those who were tired were struggling at the back. Naturally, some of the Roland soldiers were not stupid. These looked for a tree or lowlying ground to hide in first before figuring out their next step...

Running at the very front was a Roland officer that had stood guard at this last station. He was, of course, the deputy commander. The immediate superior had sacrificed himself heroically in the earlier fight and had now returned to God's embrace.

The deputy officer still had a few strong and trusted subordinates with him. In the night he and his subordinates saw a cavalry blocking the roads. However, the night was dark and it was hard to see clearly.

These soldiers felt relieved as they were not far from Thunder City. This cavalry must be soldiers from Thunder City. They ran towards the cavalry and called out excitedly. The more they ran,

the nearer they got. In the faint light of the night they could finally make out the appearance of the cavalry — the Knights' special armor, the black cloak and the special banner with a cross. These were clearly the Holy Knight Regiment.

The deputy officer's happiness immediately turned to fear when he suddenly realized something strange. The Holy Knights had gone to the frontlines with the main army. Why would there be any Holy Knight here?

Although he was still puzzled, he continued to run forward. Those were his last few steps.

Whoosh! An arrow flew and penetrated the officer's neck. He finally saw the real appearance of the cavalry in front of them. Sh*t. They were just like the enemies earlier. They were all impostors!

The last soldier that fell thought to himself: [Blindness can kill...](#)

Rody shot that arrow without waiting for Kraft's orders. Kraft just frowned and coldly looked at him. He then shouted, "Fire away!"

After that volley of arrows, most of the Roland soldiers that ran over were killed.

Kraft then waved his hand and the cavalry rushed forward. They rode to and fro twice to kill the rest of the Roland soldiers. Rody did nothing as he regretted his earlier action. Without any orders from the Deputy Commander he had shot the first arrow. He had been a Duke for so long that his hands had moved out of habit. In the army, those that acted without orders have violated the military law and would be punished.

Kraft did not say anything but glanced at him coldly. He lightly said, "These Roland soldiers were running in defeat. Looks like Sieg would be here soon."

Rody nodded his head and felt a strange feeling. He had never

cared when he was the Duke but now that he was just a small captain he had started to be overly cautious. Perhaps it was human nature. When a person of high status suddenly dropped to the bottom, there would be an indescribable sense of loss.

One of Kraft's knights led a small group and went forward to assist. Not much later, Sieg's cavalry had also arrived. Although Sieg was the Deputy Regimental Commander of the army, it was still during an urgent war period. Hence, Kraft merely straightened his body to salute instead of getting off his horse.

Sieg took a deep breath and looked at the sky before he asked, "Commander Kraft. Was your journey here smooth?"

Kraft replied, "It went fairly well! There were no Roland guards on the road. They have not discovered that road. They probably also did not realize that we have already reached here."

Sieg nodded and sighed, "Let us proceed a little bit more and then find a well-hidden spot to rest. Recover some energy. We will then attack Thunder City at dawn!" Sieg then thought for a moment and then he shouted, "Captain Rody!"

Rody was suddenly aware, and immediately shouted, "Yes!"

Sieg rode his horse slowly towards Rody's side. He then carefully looked at Rody. The more he looked at Rody, the weirder he felt. However, he was unable to tell what was wrong. Sieg then shook his head and thought. War was ongoing. What was the point of thinking so much? He dispelled his thoughts then said, "Captain Rody. Take the Duke's team of bodyguards into the tunnel. You and your men are the keys to our success in this battle!"

Rody felt uncomfortable the moment he heard this sentence. Usually, Sieg was the one saluting him. He felt uncomfortable now that the role had changed.

Far away, in the Imperial Capital, an old man was laughing while holding his stomach. "This boy finally understood the benefits of

being the Duke. There are thousands of positions that he could have chosen but he took that of a small soldier. I really do not know if his brain has a defect."

The night was silent. Even though the Roland soldiers on the Thunder City wall had just rotated shifts, they were still sleepy. The soldiers that were on patrol looked at the lazy soldiers sleeping on the wall with envy in their eyes. Who was the one that decided we would go on night patrol tonight? They jealously walked up to the lazy soldiers and kicked them awake. They then ignored the angry glares as they continued their patrol. They thought to themselves. Who asked you to kick me when I was sleeping last night?

The terrain of Thunder City was special. An ordinary fortress would be squarish, surrounded by four walls. However, Thunder City was not the same as the others.

Thunder City only had walls and gates at the North and the South. It only had two walls as the other two sides were hills that were not very high, only about twenty meters tall. Both hills faced the seaside and the sea water had eroded the rocks to form a cliff.

In fact, Thunder City was not located in an open space.

Across the coastal area of the Thunder Strait, was a long hilly range. It was a few kilometers from the sea. Thousands of years ago this was part of the sea. But later, through time it transformed into part of the land of the continent. On both sides of this mountain range was uneven rocky land. Lots of big and small rocks were scattered all over. It was passable to men and small troops. Not so for large troops, horses or carriages.

The Radiant Empire had specifically chosen this special terrain thousands of years ago. They spent a lot of money and efforts to dig a gap through the mountain. They then built the North and South walls in that gap. That was how Thunder City was built.

At the moment, the buildings in Thunder City had been

destroyed beyond recognition in the previous battle. The Roland army also did not spend a lot of time rebuilding the city. Instead, they demolished the broken buildings and used the material to reinforce the walls.

That was why most of the land in Thunder City was flat and mostly filled with the barracks.

It was dawn, the darkest hour before the sky turned bright. It was also the time the soldiers felt the most tired.

A dark figure slowly climbed out from the wells somewhere in the south of the city. The figure immediately jumped out before crouching and looking cautiously left and right. After that, more people started to climb out of the well. Hundreds of people had climbed out and they then separated into groups and went into different directions.

In the dark, Rody's men followed the dilapidated buildings and approached the southern wall of the city. The dozen or so men that followed him were the Duke's bodyguards that had become vampires. Relying on their familiarity with the city's terrain they hid in a ruined building, trying to stay hidden. The Roland soldiers that were on patrol occasionally passed by them. None of them would have guessed that the enemy had already entered the city. After all, there were another three or more checkpoints on the road south of Thunder City.

The surroundings were extremely quiet as Rody quietly waited as he squatted on the ground.

After some time, he heard some noises coming from the city. Ping! A rocket-fireworks shot into the sky in a shower of sparkles. This was the prearranged signal for him.

The other soldiers in the city had deliberately made trouble to attract the attention of the Roland army. It was also a signal for Rody in the city and Sieg outside the city to get to work.

The fireworks shone in the night sky for a long time. In the darkness of the night, even those that were more than ten miles away could see the fireworks clearly.

The Roland army was alerted as the nearby soldiers rushed out to investigate where the fireworks came from. The soldiers who were patrolling near Rody also ran towards it.

Rody sighed and said, "The Roland army is really not good! This situation is obviously a surprise attack by the enemy. How many enemies are there in the city? There was also no need to be nervous! If I was the one giving orders, I would first order the soldiers to reinforce the city gate defenses!"

Rody then took a deep breath, stood up, and said, "Let's go!"

Rody took the lead and immediately rushed out.

More than a dozen ghost-like figures ran quickly towards the gates. The Roland soldiers at the gates immediately realized what happened and some of them started to yell and scream. Rody and his men quickly rushed towards them and swung their swords. Two Roland men immediately fell.

The soldiers on the walls were also alerted. A group of soldiers ran down the walls. As the officers shouted loudly, the soldiers in the dark were more lost than anything. Some soldiers had just woken up and did not understand what was the noise all about.

There were about one hundred Roland soldiers near the gates. However, Rody and the others were very powerful. They charged fiercely into the Roland crowd and very quickly cut down a large number of Roland soldiers.

Many of the Roland soldiers have not reacted. They saw several people rushing over in the Holy Knight's armor. They had trouble understanding the situation. They were surprised and hesitated. Just this slight hesitation was sufficient for Rody and the dozen other people to act. It was enough for them to cut off the heads of

these soldiers.

At that point in time, the other squads of the Empire began to make trouble everywhere in the city. Fires started in more than a dozen different spots. Although they only had a hundred people, they had caused a really huge commotion in Thunder City, with fire and screams all over the place.

Rody and his vampire subordinates swung their swords in the crowd as many tragic screams could be heard in the dark. Their objective was clearly the city gates nearby.

The muffled sound of horses thronged together could be heard outside the gates. The soldiers on the wall finally realized the situation and shouted, "There is a cavalry! The enemy is attacking the city!"

The enemy is attacking the city?

The soldiers at the city gates that were struggling against Rody and his soldiers were in disorder. The enemy is attacking the city? Where did they come from? Did they fall from the sky?

However, when they heard the hoarse frantic shouting from the top of the city walls, they knew that it must be true...

Rody's sword slashed out again and two more Roland soldiers were sliced into two. He heard the horses outside the city and felt anxious. It would be problematic if the cavalry had reached the gates of the city before it opened. After all, there were archers on the walls. The cavalymen that approached would just become targets for the archers.

Rody gritted his teeth as he looked at his trusted vampire bodyguards. He growled and fought against a Roland soldier beside him. After fighting for a while, he had already broken that soldier's limbs and ribs. Rody then pushed away the badly mangled person and grabbed a sword from the ground. His eyes flashed suddenly and a golden fighting energy burst forth from his body. He looked

at the huge solid gates not far from him and roared. His sword glowed with a dazzling light, whistled and shot forward...

Just before this, two Roland soldiers were standing at the city gates at the northern wall. The Regiment Commander of the Second Infantry Regiment of the Sauron Kingdom, in charge of guarding Thunder City, said in a respectful tone, "Your Excellency, Saint. Are you leaving tonight?"

In front of him was a slender figure dressed in a black robe. Her head was hidden underneath the hood. Her clear and delicate voice replied, "I have already conveyed the Temple's orders and have transported the supplies from the ship. You do not have to persuade me to stay."

After that, she gazed to the south. A slight doubt crossed her clear eyes. She then turned and walked towards the North Gate. Following behind her were four Senior Holy Knights. The four young Holy Knights looked at her with respect and love.

The Regiment Commander took a deep breath and said, "Your Excellency Saint. Have a pleasant journey! I..." He originally wanted to curry favor with this Roland Temple Saint. After all, a Saint's position was as high as a King's. Although the Saint seemed cold and in a bad mood, a few words of praise would be appropriate.

Unfortunately, before he could say those last few words, he saw soldiers rushing towards him.

The four Holy Knights immediately turned around and stood in a circle around the Saint to protect her as they drew their swords.

The Regiment Commander's expression changed and was about to scold his men when he noticed his men were covered in blood. In a panic, he asked them, "What happened? You..."

Before the soldiers could answer, there was an explosion and a fireworks flare appeared in the sky above Thunder City. It then

shot across the sky like a shooting star.

The quiet night was broken and shouts of killing arose from everywhere in the city. The sky lighted up with flames after that.

The Regiment Commander turned pale and loudly shouted, "Pass down my orders! Fifth Battalion! Go! See what is going on! See if the heathens have attacked the city!"

The Regiment Commander was still calm as the messenger ran off to transmit his orders. The Black Veil Saint hesitated for a moment and asked, "Regiment Commander. Has the situation changed?"

The Regiment Commander started to sweat as he replied, "The current situation is unknown. Most likely the Roland people are causing a commotion in the city... Saint, what do you..."

The Saint frowned and coldly replied, "You are the Regiment Commander of Thunder City. Why are you asking me instead?"

The Regiment Commander nodded his head and said, "Yes... Yes... Then..." He then hesitated as he looked at the Saint.

Muse sighed. Although she opposed the war, she could not do much on her own against the Temple. Now, she was ordered to come to the front to convey an order from the Temple. She looked at the four Holy Knights beside her and said, "There is a change in the situation of the army. Check it out." The four knights immediately saluted and stepped forward.

Muse pondered for a moment and said, "Regiment Commander. The enemy is creating disorder at night. However, we have tens of thousands of soldiers in the city. Small infiltrating units causing disorder is nothing significant. Their main objective must be to capture the city gates in the middle of the disorder. Dispatch soldiers to the South Gate. There should be..."

At that moment, Muse suddenly stopped. She had a strange and familiar feeling. That... is a gold fighting energy... Is it his Holy

Light? He had progressed so much in just a few months? If it is not him... why does the fighting energy feel so familiar?

For a while, Muse was speechless. The wind blew on her face as she looked towards the south dreamily...

The soldier thought. 青光眼害死人啊 Direct translation would be 'Glaucoma frightened people to death.' In other words, the soldier was lamenting the fact that he was too blind to see.

Glaucoma is a disease that damages the optic nerve and eventually causes blindness. An acute glaucoma attack can cause blurry visions, headaches, among other things.

Chapter 190: The Tulip Bloomed

There was a huge explosion and it created a large hole in the thick ironwood city gate. Broken pieces were thrown all over. The Empire's cavalry cheered from outside the city gate. A hurried drumming sound was heard as the horses charged in quickly through the gate in a long line. Even though the soldiers on the wall heard the loud explosion, they could not see and therefore did not know the gate had already been blasted open. But when they saw a big cavalry rush towards the city gate, the brave ones grabbed their bows and arrows and shot out a few arrows. As for the ones who were scared, they just ran down the wall tower.

Rody had been in an arduous war. Although the warriors he brought were valiant and all had been transformed into vampires, not everyone was abnormally fierce and powerful like him. At the moment, except for Rody, everybody had put in their best effort. The Roland army was confused but they understood the consequences of allowing the enemy cavalry to enter the city.

Rody approached the city gate as he slashed left and right, forcing the Roland soldiers to move out of their positions. He then pulled open one-half of the city gate. He was startled when his back was slashed. That opened a big gap at the back of his armor. Rody raised his eyebrows and turned around, killing the assailant with a backhand slash. After that, he moved quickly to the edge of the city gate... as he did not want to be trampled on by the horses of the Lightning God's Whip.

With dust flying, tens of thousands of Lightning God's Whip had already rushed into the city. The hundreds of Roland infantrymen, who originally blocked the city gate, had no time to even moan before they were drowned in the surge of iron pouring in.

Things began moving within the Roland barracks. Countless soldiers climbed out of their tents. Some were wearing their clothes while some were wearing their armors. Some were looking

for their weapons while some were looking for their commanding officers. There were also some who could not find their own swords and ended up scrambling for them with their companions...

Even some officers of the Roland army who heard the emergency assembly bugle call did not know what was going on.

The tens of thousands of cavalry who rushed into Thunder City immediately split into two groups. One group went left while the other went right. They charged towards the two large barracks of the Roland army in Thunder City.

The first unlucky ones were the Roland army infantry, whose barracks were located on the right side. The night vigil soldiers had panicked the entire time as there were fire and screams everywhere. Everything happened so quickly that they could not understand what was going on.

Surrounded by chaos at the barracks, they saw horses coming towards them. From afar, they could see the banner of the 'Holy Knights Regiment'. Hmm? The Holy Knights?

While these Roland soldiers were still confused, they heard the 'Holy Knights' shout, "Retreat! Quickly run!"

There was a huge commotion. The Holy Knights are retreating?

There was an explosion and countless soldiers ran helter-skelter. When the Holy Knights got nearer the people of Roland continent finally noticed the difference and exclaimed...

"Shit! Imposters! We are dead!"

Everyone in the Lightning God's Whip had to learn two words from the dialect of the Roland continent. Those words were 'retreat' and 'run'.

During the commotion at night, a group of 'Holy Knights' had dashed in, shouting loudly at the same time — any soldier who saw this would, of course, run first. Even the 'Holy Knights' have lost

and are deserting. Only an idiot would not run. If you don't run your head would soon roll down on the ground.

The situation at the barracks on the left was a little bit better. The deputy commander was more composed. Although he could not totally suppress the chaotic situation in the barracks, he was able to maintain control of two thousand of the more elite soldiers and organized them into a battle formation.

He then saw Rody brought a large troop of cavalry and force their way in. Those cavalymen shouted, "Retreat, quickly run," in the Roland dialect. As the Roland soldiers started to fall into disorder, that deputy commander cut down a dozen of those soldiers who were thinking of running away. He then shouted, "Nonsense! Since when are the Holy Knights in Thunder City? These are impostors! Let's fight!"

Rody saw the enemy approaching instead of running away. Even in a state of commotion, the enemy's infantry formation did not collapse. Rody realized that they had already seen through his ruse. He immediately raised his sword, shouting, "Wolf Fang!"

Tens of thousands of cavalymen roared simultaneously, "Kill!"

Rody had used all his strength to shout 'Wolf Fang' in a booming loud voice. His voice reverberated throughout the city, right up to the north. When Muse heard his voice, she was so startled she could barely stand. She pushed about a dozen of the Holy Knights out of her way and ran a few steps towards the South. Suddenly, she stopped.

Muse's body was trembling.

It's him! It's him! Without a doubt, it is him! It is his voice!

Involuntarily, her tears started to flow. Muse bit her lip to stop herself from crying out loud.

"Ho... Ho... Holy Saint... Your Excellency..." The Regiment Commander of the Roland army turned pale. At the moment,

shouting voices reverberated in the city. Although he did not know how many soldiers from the Radiant Empire had entered the city, he believed that there must be a lot of them.

Muse tightly clenched her fists and whispered in a hoarse voice, "It is already too late! Regiment Commander, it looks like a large troop of enemy soldiers has already entered the city! Didn't you hear that sound earlier?"

The Regiment Commander's face was full of sweat as he replied, "It... It is the Wolf Fang... Wolf Fang... I will immediately send some soldiers to regroup and fight back!"

Even an idiot could tell that the Regiment Commander was almost losing his voice! It was at this moment that the messenger who ran out earlier had returned, struggling as he did. He shouted before he even reached the Regiment Commander. "Your Excellency! Your Excellency! The left barracks are gone!"

The moment that Regiment Commander heard those words he felt his legs go soft and immediately sat on the ground.

Muse sighed as she looked towards the South. She could hear the screams of the frightened people fighting. She gazed tenderly and thought to herself. That guy must be very close to me, now.

"Saint!" One of the Holy Knights asked, "Your Excellency, what should we do? Should we help them confront the enemy?"

These young Holy Knights were amongst the more excellent people from the Temple. All of them were currently eager to go out.

Muse looked at the Regiment Commander who was on the floor and said, "Confront the enemy? Confront what enemy? Let's leave!"

After that, Muse turned towards the city gate as her robes fluttered. The four Holy Knights followed behind her. One of them was puzzled and he asked, "Your Excellency, Muse, are we going to

just ignore this?"

Muse felt agitated but tried to make her voice sound as cold as possible. "What else can we do? Their main army has already entered the city and we have lost our barracks. Do you think the five of us can repel them? Let's go!"

That Holy Knight was about to reply when Muse glared at him and coldly said, "Shut up!"

After saying that, Muse no longer looked back and walked towards the city gate.

Her footsteps were heavy and she felt like every step required a lot of effort. In fact, Muse would rather those people get out of her way, so that she could, regardless of everything, go towards the south.

But is that possible? After all, I am a Saint of the Temple. Although I am against the war, I will not betray my faith.

Further... and further... With every step she took, Muse was further and further away from that person. The black veil that covered her face was already soaked with tears.

The horses had already been prepared outside the city. Muse took a deep breath and looked back. She slowly closed her eyes and whispered in the common language of the Radiant Empire, "If you do not forget me, I will never forget you! You better stay alive... I will wait for you!"

She then bit her lips, turned around and mounted her horse. Muse and the four Holy Knights galloped towards a ship waiting near the shore...

The Roland army in the city had completely collapsed and was not able to organize any effective resistance. The situation had become completely one-sided. Tens of thousands of the Lightning God's Whip used their mighty momentum to destroy the barracks of the Roland army. After that, they chased the Roland army out of

the city to the north.

The Lightning God's Whip did not expect to completely annihilate the entire Roland army as the Roland army still had a lot of soldiers. It would be impossible to kill every single one of them at once. In fact, the Roland army was only defeated in the sense that they were extremely frightened and disorganized.

Tens of thousands of the defeated Roland soldiers were like an ocean wave moving away from the Northern gate. They no longer thought about anything else. There was only one thought: Run! There were no enemies in front.

When the Lightning God's Whip finally reached the Northern gate, Sieg immediately ordered them to stop.

Those frightened Roland soldiers who were still running away suddenly realized that their enemy was no longer chasing them. When the braver ones turned around to look, they noticed that the city gate had already been closed.

Tens of thousands of the defeated Roland army were scattered outside the North gate of Thunder City. They were in between the ocean and a solid wall.

The officers of the Roland army began to gather their army. That Regiment Commander had also retreated from Thunder City. He only breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that the Lightning God's Whip stopped chasing them. After counting the number of soldiers remaining, he found that the Roland army did not lose that many soldiers. They still had about eighty percent of their original troop of about one hundred thousand soldiers.

Some of the smarter soldiers from the Roland army also thought to themselves. Perhaps, their enemy did not have that many soldiers.

"We were tricked!" The Regiment Commander roared. He then drew his sword and shouted, "Let us strike back!"

Strike back?

The man's subordinates looked at each other. Strike back?

They looked at the soldiers around themselves. Some had no armors while some had no weapons. Some of them did not even have the time to put on their pants. Those who had dropped their shoes while escaping were already considered fortunate.

Strike back?

They turned around to look at the solid wall and the thick and heavy ironwood city gate as they asked themselves the same question. "Strike back?"

They may have seventy to eighty thousand soldiers. However, every two soldiers would need to share a sword. Besides that, about thirty people would need to gather what they wore to barely make a complete set of armor.

Besides that, they had no tools for a siege; no catapults, no chariots, and not even ladders.

How do we attack them? Do you want our soldiers to bang their heads against the city gate?

Kraft led the Lightning God's Whip around to inspect the city and they strangled any remaining Roland soldiers found scattered in the city. Sieg led his soldiers to the Southern wall. Although they had won the battle at Thunder City, there was an urgent matter that they must immediately attend to. They must immediately strengthen the Southern wall and the Southern gate of the city. That was because the main force of the Roland army may launch a counter attack

Besides that, there may have been some Roland soldiers that had escaped from the first checkpoint that Sieg and the Wolf Fang had attacked, on the way here. Those escaped soldiers may have retreated towards the main army in the Pamir Plain. In order to expedite the surprise attack, Sieg did not chase them down. It

would not have mattered. Everything was according to their plans. By the time the Roland soldiers reached the Pamir Plain, the Lightning God's Whip would already be very far away from them. By the time the main Roland army arrived at Thunder City, it would have already been captured.

The key to this war was the timing.

Sieg brought his men to the Southern wall to make preparations. He ordered Rody to remain at the North wall. After all, Rody was currently the captain of the bodyguards of His Excellency the Duke. Although he was just a captain, everybody knew the implications of being the captain of the Duke's bodyguard. Besides that, he had performed well in the earlier battle.

Just before Sieg left, he said, "I leave the North to you. Just be careful of the Roland army outside of the city."

Seeing Sieg leaving for the Southern wall with his men, Rody sighed with relief. Every time he stood near Sieg, he felt very nervous. Sieg was already too familiar with the 'Duke of the Tulip Family' and Rody was afraid that he might carelessly reveal his identity. In fact, Rody had only used his golden fighting energy once to break open the city gate. However, ever since Sieg led his soldiers into the city, Rody no longer dared use the golden fighting energy again. He must show that he only had the ability of a Grade 5 swordsman.

With a sigh, Rody took his men up the wall.

Previously, he had fought a bloody battle against the Roland army on that part of the wall. Rody leaned on the wall as he looked out at the tens of thousands of defeated Roland army in the wilderness outside the city.

One of the officers from the Lightning God's Whip could not help but ask, "Officer, what should we do with those Roland soldiers? Should we go out and kill them?"

Rody shook his head and whispered, "There is no need for that... Right now, some of them aren't even wearing pants! Just let them die slowly on their own. If we go out and kill them, we will waste our strength and resources. Either way, they would not be able to attack us, so we can just let them wait! The Roland army's supplies would probably take several days to arrive. In those few days, even if they do not starve to death, they would freeze to death."

Rody paused for a moment before he gave an order. "Let some of our squads watch from the top of the wall. The Roland soldiers won't be able to do anything. As long as they do not approach the gate, they can do whatever they like. If anyone approaches the gate, shoot him with your arrows."

Rody sighed as he looked at the sky turn brighter in the east. Rody then looked at the distance. North of the city was an open space and beyond that was the coastline.

Rody was not sure if it was a psychological or a natural response, but when he looked at the coastline, he felt his heart stir.

"Your Excellency..." The officer of the Lightning God's Whip, behind Rody, saw him was in a daze and could not help but call out to him.

"Hm?" Rody immediately snapped out of his daze and asked, "What's wrong?"

"Are you alright?"

Rody shook his head and frowned. "Nothing... it is just that for some reason, I have a strange and familiar feeling ..." He softly murmured. Suddenly, Rody's eyes grew wide and he trembled. He then grabbed the wall and stuck his body out of the wall as he looked at the distance.

"Muse... Is that you?"

At that moment, Muse was standing on the aft of a ship with her hands behind her back. The ship was already several hundred

meters from the shore. The waves rushed as the salty sea breeze blew. However, Muse looked as if she was oblivious to it as she looked towards the south.

As they moved further away from Thunder City, the tall sturdy towers became smaller until it eventually looked like a black spot.

"Right now, he must have already captured Thunder City. What does he look like now? Will he still rudely and angrily call me a fool, like he used to?" Muse gently closed her eyes.

She slowly lifted her slender hands to remove her black hood from her head. The sea breeze blew and raised her long and black hair. Muse could not help but lifted one of her palms and emitted a ball of silver light.

The silver light shot up towards the gray sky and lit up the darkness like a magnificent firework.

Muse looked up at the huge apparition she had created in the sky. It looked like a blooming tulip flower.

"Rody, if you see this tulip, come and look for me in the Roland Continent!"

At the same time, the Lightning God's Whips who were standing on the wall also saw the apparition of the tulip in the distant sky. The soldiers immediately became vigilant. Are the Roland soldiers coming again? Are they the Roland sorcerers?

Only when Rody saw the apparition of the blooming tulip in the sky did he gradually calm down. It must be her! It is definitely her!

Rody smiled. He suddenly stretched out his hand and patted the shoulder of the officer of the Lightning God's Whip beside him. He then said in a calm and firm voice, "After passing through this strait, would we be in the Roland mainland?"

That officer gave Rody a strange look and said, "Your Excellency... Didn't you see that in the sky?"

"I saw it." Rody nodded and laughed. "Isn't it beautiful?"

Chapter 191: Valiant Warrior

The Lightning God's Whip was tense as they repaired the Southwestern wall of Thunder City. The few hundred captive Roland soldiers were whipped and forced to gather large rocks to strengthen the city wall. At the same time, they had to repair the city gate and to pile up numerous huge rocks at the back of the gate.

Sieg was undoubtedly a very harsh person; he showed no compassion to the captive Roland soldiers. That was why his subordinates, the Lightning God's Whip, also did not hesitate to fiercely whip any of the prisoners who were slow.

Sieg could not be considered cruel. It was just ridiculous to show sympathy for those who invaded his homeland.

While the Southwestern wall was being repaired, on the main road about a hundred miles south of Thunder City, a large troop of Roland cavalry was making every effort to rush in.

Earlier on, after Sieg's soldiers had broken through the second northern line of Roland defense, the Supreme Commander of the Coalition Armies of the Roland Continent in Pamir Plain had received the bad news from the returning defeated soldiers.

At that time, Tiger felt as if he had just stepped off a high overhanging cliff.

In his rage, he cut down the defeated officer into two and angrily ordered the Holy Knights, at all costs, to immediately return to the Thunder City.

No matter what, Thunder City must be recaptured.

If Thunder City was captured by the enemy, not only would Tiger and his main army lose their only escape route, their supply line would also be cut off.

"Now we can only hope that our last stronghold on the road to

the north, can stop the Lightning God's Whip!" Tiger sighed, "Perhaps, we will be able to catch up. After all, we have nearly a hundred thousand soldiers in Thunder City. It would not be so easy for the Lightning God's Whip to win. Even if the Empire has tens of thousands of cavalry attacking us from behind, they are unlikely to capture our main defense army station at Thunder City. Siege warfare... is not the cavalry's strong point."

Tiger had forgotten that the Holy Knights he sent out were also cavalries. If Thunder City was lost then could those powerful Holy Knights recapture it?

Three Senior Knights led tens of thousands of Holy Knights forward. They were only a few dozen miles away from Thunder City. In the distance, right in front of them on the road north, was the last military stronghold. Along the way, they found that the two earlier strongholds had already been broken through by the Radiant Empire army. Only some corpses and remains of the brutal killings were found.

"Speed up! We will reach the Thunder City by nightfall!" One of the Senior Knights shouted.

The last stronghold was about ten miles south of Thunder City. Situated across the road was the last line of defense, originally arranged by Tiger as a guarded gateway. However, the ones that were currently stationed here were the five thousand Lightning God's Whip left behind by Sieg.

Their mission was to guard that place for a day. More than half a day had passed since His Excellency Sieg gave the order. They only needed to guard that place for a few more hours and their mission would have been completed.

The commanding officer, for the five thousand Lightning God's Whip, was a Grade 4 swordsman named Xavi. When he heard the faint trampling of the horses in the distance he realized that the Roland army had arrived!

The large trees on both sides of the roads had already been cut down and the soldiers had placed those trees on the main road. Xavi was certain that the Roland army who would be arriving would be a large cavalry. The people of Roland Continent would be eager to recapture Thunder City. In order to move quickly, they would despatch their most powerful soldiers, the Holy Knights.

Xavi knew that it would be impossible for his five thousand Lightning God's Whip to fight head-on against tens of thousands of Holy Knights on the wide main road. They used the Roland army's fortification and the trees they had just cut down to form a crude line of defense. That defensive structure might not be able to prevent a large group of infantry from attacking them but it was enough to stop a cavalry charge.

In fact, Xavi's actions were desperate. He knew that his troop of five thousand soldiers would not win this battle. He only wanted to delay the enemy. The longer the Roland army remained there the better. That was because new defenses would need to be deployed at Thunder City, which they had just captured.

The longer he held out, the stronger the defenses of Thunder City.

Xavi saw the vanguard of the Holy Knights approaching. He and his five thousand warriors had also long abandoned their horses. They hid behind the defenses and waited patiently.

The Holy Knights soon found that there were obstacles blocking the road. They had no choice but to stop. They dismounted and proceeded on foot with their shields ready.

The battle started all of a sudden as a volley of arrows rained down without warning.

At that moment, in the Pamir Plain, Tiger needed to make an extremely important decision. Should we forge on ahead or should we retreat?

Tiger placed a gag order on the information that Thunder City had been attacked. The only people who knew were all the highest ranked generals.

After that, the representatives of the coalition armies of all the ten kingdoms of Roland Continent had a fierce argument inside the large tent of the Supreme Commander.

There were two factions arguing. The first faction was of the opinion that the whole army should set out to recapture Thunder City. That was because it is their only escape route and also their supply route.

The other faction felt that they should ignore Thunder City. They felt that they should immediately focus their entire military strength and confront the main army of the Radiant Empire. Once their enemy was defeated, Thunder City would no longer be important as they could then obtain as much supplies as they need from the Empire's territory. As long as the main army of the Radiant Empire was defeated, then they would also be able to take advantage and break through the defenses on Pamir Plain. From there, they could capture one or two big cities in the North and the problem of supplies would be solved.

The military officer who adhered to that faction was very bold. His reasoning was that since they had sent a cavalry to attack Thunder City, then it must be their strongest cavalry, the Lightning God's Whip. They should take advantage of the fact that the Lightning God's Whip was not around to defeat the main army of the Empire.

Tiger felt very conflicted. In his heart, he actually preferred the latter solution.

Go back, immediately? Would the enemy's main army just allow hundreds of thousands of our troop to fall back so easily? They would definitely not let go! They would tail us! The current military supplies would last for only ten more days. Of course, if an

order to limit the distribution of supplies is given, then it would last for more than twenty days.

Within a twenty-days time frame, tens of thousands of his army had to recapture Thunder City. The journey back would also take up a few days as not all of the soldiers were cavalry. There were infantries and also the slow supply carriages. After that, they would need to break past the solid city wall guarded by the Lightning God's Whip.

Could all this be accomplished in twenty days?

But, Tiger was surprised that the Holy Knights insisted on returning to Thunder City. Paladin Fielding, in particular, was especially insistent and unyielding.

Tiger could, perhaps, ignore the noisy representatives of the small kingdoms. However, the Holy Knights represent the Temple. That was something that Tiger needed to consider carefully.

As a result, he had no choice but to first dispatch the Holy Knights to quickly advance to Thunder City. However, Tiger knew that even if he does not give the order, the Holy Knights would have gone there on their own.

Fifty thousand Holy Knights had already set out for two days, yet Tiger still refused to withdraw.

In front of them was the entire force of the enemy's main army in the North. If they could break through that line of defense, then the big piece of land in the North behind the defense line, Kaka City, the capital of the Northern Province... there would no longer be any defense in the North.

As long as they occupied the opponent's Northern province, then the problem of supplies in the army would be resolved. When that time comes, they would think of ways to recapture Thunder City. After all, they would still get reinforcements from Roland Continent and it would not be difficult then to capture Thunder

City with a pincer attack.

Tiger persevered for two days. In those two days, he ordered his soldiers to attack the Empire's strong line of defense.

One after another, the infantry regiments charged in. However, the soldiers of the Empire hid behind their defenses and refused to come out. Tiger realized that the Empire was trying to delay him. The Empire intended to wait until they gave up and were forced to withdraw. Then, his opponent would have won.

The defenses at Pamir Plain were attacked by wave after wave of Roland soldiers. Tiger hardened his heart and dispatched the elite soldiers of Sauron Kingdom. He no longer tried to conserve his military resources. The situation no longer warranted that.

The Sauron Kingdom was known as the most powerful kingdom of the Roland Continent. His army was naturally much stronger compared to the armies of the other kingdoms.

Groups after groups of soldiers sacrificed their lives at the Empire's defense line. The trenches in the defense line were filled with corpses.

Meanwhile, in the Duke's tent behind the defensive line, Randt sat there gloomily, pulling off his hair.

He was extremely bored for the past three days, staying in the tent. The loyal Randt followed the orders of His Excellency the Duke and did not even step out of the tent.

When the military officers outside asked to see the Chief Commander, Randt replied, "No!"

When somebody outside reported that the Roland army attacked, Randt pinched his throat and gave the order, "Defend."

When someone outside reported that the enemy's attack was extremely aggressive, Randt shouted before they could finish speaking, "Go and ask His Excellency, Milo."

The fierce attacks lasted for two days. Both armies had fought until they had no time to clean up the battlefield. Countless corpses fell in the wilderness. Layers upon layers of corpses even blocked the Roland army from attacking.

Tiger was extremely agitated and had not slept for two days. If his men had not stopped him, he would have personally led the attacks.

However, two days later, the Radiant Empire's defenses were still strong. Although it was breached at noon, the gap was eventually plugged with flesh and blood by the Radiant Empire soldiers.

Tiger gritted his teeth and looked at the distance. He was not looking at the scattered corpses in the wilderness. Instead, he was looking at the defenses of the Radiant Empire.

Almost there! Almost there! The enemy would also not be able to last much longer!

Tiger was very confident. Although the opponent's defenses were tight, the defenses on the plains could not be stronger than the defenses in the solid city wall. He believed that after so many days of fighting, his enemy would also have heavy losses.

"It only looks strong!" Tiger gritted his teeth. "Just give me three days... If I have three days, I would be able to break through their defenses!"

"Three days..." Tiger murmured before he suddenly laughed. His face showed a crazy smile filled with desperation and nervousness. Right. Three days! However, would those guys believe me and give me three days?

After three days, the remaining supplies would only last for less than five more days. In the past two days of fierce attacks, although a lot of his soldiers had perished, Tiger believed that his opponent had also suffered heavy losses.

However, the consumption of supplies was extremely fast during

the battles.

The cowards would not allow him to have three more days.

Even the sorcerers of the Temple had also insisted on retreating.

"Hahaha..." Tiger could not help but laugh. His subordinates behind him were surprised to see the actions of their Supreme Commander. Tiger then roared loudly, "Retreat? Retreat? Are you saying that we must retreat after losing so many people? The people from the Temple are now so insistent on retreating. Why did they start the war in the first place?"

At first, he had placed his hopes in Reuenthal from the Northwest. However, Tiger had long been disappointed. What Wolf of the Grassland? He is just a fool!

What do you mean armored cavalry of the grassland? They are all just a group of trash!

They could not even make any progress against the defense of the Northwest Legion, whose strength was considered second-rate.

On the third day, Randt was sitting in the Duke's tent when someone called out to him.

"The Roland army seems to be retreating. What should we do?"

"Hmm?" Randt jumped up. Had he not remembered the Duke's orders, just in time, he would have already called out.

He desperately suppressed the excitement in his heart and replied in a hoarse voice, "Go and ask His Excellency, Milo!"

During the time when Tiger was being pressured to withdraw, the Holy Knights, who were less than ten miles from Thunder City, had finally broken through the strong defense line.

The five thousand Lightning God's Whip men were totally wiped out. They were confronted by a group of dismounted Holy Knights, armed with shields and swords. With their shabby fortifications, they stubbornly held on for six hours.

After shooting all their arrows, the soldiers took out their scimitars to engage in melee combat.

The five thousand soldiers fought against tens of thousands of enemy soldiers from evening until dawn.

The hopelessly outnumbered Lightning God's Whip remarkably completed their mission. They had delayed tens of thousands of enemy soldiers at that line of defense.

When the last Lightning God's Whip finally collapsed, there was no living Empire's soldier left on that defensive line.

In the beginning, the Holy Knights abided by the Knight's Spirit and no longer harmed the injured soldiers. However, they soon discovered that that was a fatal mistake. Even if the Lightning God's Whip soldiers were seriously injured and were lying on the ground, as long as they could still move, they would hold on to the legs of their enemies. Their companions would then take advantage of that moment to cut down the enemies.

Enemies like those were extremely dangerous as long as they still had not breathed their last breath.

The Holy Knights were forced to give up their Knight's Spirit. When dealing with any Lightning God's Whip, whether they were alive or seriously injured, the safest way was to cut off their heads. That was to confirm that the Lightning God's Whip had really died and they could rest assured.

The face of the man leading the knights was covered in blood. He had just personally killed a particularly tenacious officer amongst the Lightning God's Whip. It seemed that person was what the heathens called a Grade 4 or a Grade 5 swordsman. Under normal circumstances, if we were to fight, I can still defeat him but I will need to take a while. However, when we fought just now, that guy was already seriously injured and I only needed six strikes to successfully stab his chest...

However, the Senior Knight did not escape unscathed. When his sword stabbed one of the enemy soldiers he thought that that was the end of that enemy. But that soldier suddenly hugged him like a madman. The two men struggled and fell to the ground. During the struggle, the knight's helmet also came off. At that moment, that soldier from the Lightning God's Whip opened his mouth and bit the knight in the face!

Although that soldier finally died after exhausting his energy, the Senior Knight was extremely shocked and terrified.

Madman! That guy is insane! The bite just now was so painful that my tears almost flowed! He had already bit off a piece of flesh from my handsome face! Luckily, he had already lost his sense of reasoning and did not bite my neck, where the blood vessels...

The knight tore out a piece of cloth from his clothes to cover his bleeding face. He then shouted with a hoarse voice, "Advance! Advance! Advance immediately!"

Was he frightened? Perhaps, he was more shocked or astonished.

Even when faced with tens of thousands of Roland soldiers, the Lightning God's Whip still managed to delay the Roland soldiers for so long with just such simple fortifications. Besides that, the Lightning God's Whip had also caused the Roland people to suffer heavy losses.

The losses suffered by both sides are almost equal.

Although the combat effectiveness of the Lightning God's Whip was slightly better than that of the Holy Knights, the Holy Knights had more people and had the advantage.

That Senior Knight threw the cloth that was soaked with blood onto the ground. He then looked at the ground full of corpses and said, "Leave ten men behind to bury these bodies."

He paused for a while and then continued, "It does not matter if it is our men or theirs. Bury all of them!"

Yes, they are our enemies. They are strong enemies. However, at the same time, they are warriors worthy of respect.

Chapter 192: Prelude to Climax

It was winter when the decisive battle of the second crusade finally began. That battle was later referred to as the '[Sandwich Biscuits](#)'.

After tense preparations by the Roland Continent Coalition Army, a large-scale retreat from the Pamir Plain began.

Tiger had already lost confidence in the war. However, as the Supreme Commander — or at least, he still was, in name — Tiger carefully arranged for the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

Since it was a retreat, it was inevitable to leave a few soldiers behind to guard the rear. As the various groups had different ideas, there was a heated debate to decide who should stay behind to guard the rear.

Tiger did not participate in the discussion. He just sat there and sneered as he watched the others quarrel.

Finally, they decided to leave behind the infantry regiment of the Goethe Kingdom.

The one known as the second-rate infantry throughout the war was entrusted with the important task of courting death.

After leaving behind thirty thousand of the Goethe Kingdom's infantry, Tiger withdrew with the Royal Knights of the Sauron Kingdom and the sorcerers. They were the first to retreat from the battlefield.

Tiger no longer wanted to bother with the other groups of soldiers. As for the infantry of Goethe Kingdom, Tiger did not believe that they could accomplish the task of breaking off the enemy pursuit. The Goethe Kingdom's soldiers were not so brave and would probably surrender.

"Let us wait and die! All of us are just waiting to die!" Tiger's eyes

were cold as he looked at the main camp behind him. "They sent us to our deaths in this war!"

Milo was an outstanding general. Prejudices aside, he actually was quite capable.

Without the Lightning God's Whip under his command, Milo began his pursuit of the Roland army.

Milo did not dispatch all the troops at once. In the beginning, he carefully sent out a few troops to harass the enemy to slow down their retreat. He tried his best to delay them.

It would not be wise to fight directly with the enemy now.

Consume it all! Waste your time, your energy and your food supplies!

The infantry of the Goethe Kingdom who was responsible for holding the rear collectively surrendered after two days. Thirty thousand people became prisoners...

That was all as expected by Tiger. Whatever the case, the thirty thousand prisoners would be able to delay the army of the Radiant Empire from chasing them.

However, Tiger... or perhaps, everybody from the Roland Continent was shocked by what happened next.

All thirty thousand prisoners were ordered to be slaughtered by Milo within the night.

Although many officers did not support Milo's decision and many, in fact, even complained to His Excellency the Duke... but His Excellency the Duke still did not show up. The 'Duke' remained in the tent and told them, "Go and ask General Milo.

Within the night, all thirty thousand Roland prisoners were executed. Milo surrounded the prisoners in the barracks of the Roland army. He then sent out a troop of heavy cavalry and began to attack. The sound of fighting lasted throughout the night as the

soil was dyed red.

Milo did not have any intention of cleaning up the battlefield. He ordered his soldiers to burn the barracks of the Roland army along with the corpses.

Although many military officers of the Empire objected to Milo's actions, they could not disobey his command. "If we take along those thirty thousand prisoners, we would need to allocate at least twenty thousand soldiers to watch over them! We do not have that many people and it is impossible to leave behind twenty thousand soldiers on the plain and waste them on those prisoners!"

Milo's last sentence was also straightforward, "No mercy for invaders!"

Because of Milo's harassment, the Roland army retreated very slowly. They left behind their treasured wagons and only took along their supplies.

Milo was clever and did not send his army to fight against the Roland army. He dispatched a few light cavalries to go back and forth to harass the Roland army so that they could not retreat peacefully. Meanwhile, his main army steadily approached from behind.

He maximized the use of that 'delaying' tactic in the current situation.

It was a full five days when the exhausted Roland army finally arrived at the south side of Thunder City. They had already put in their utmost effort.

Tiger was not surprised to find the Holy Knights at their wit's end below the city wall.

As expected, the Holy Knights were unable to recapture Thunder City.

Tiger had a ridiculous thought when he looked at the banner of the Tulip Family above the city wall — he felt like he was just a

bystander and the predicament in front of him had nothing to do with him.

It was now necessary for a last-ditch effort. The Roland army became desperate in the face of the predicament. The coalition armies gathered their final courage, regardless of which kingdom they were from, and charged towards the banner of the Tulip Family, which was fluttering above the wall of Thunder City.

They were greeted with arrows and stones.

The joke was that those arrows and also the food used by the Lightning God's Whip, in Thunder City, were all initially the hoarded supplies of the Roland army.

So, a strange battle began. The Roland army was caught between Thunder City and Milo's army. In front, the Roland army began a fierce battle at Thunder City while they were being attacked from behind by Milo's army.

Frankly speaking, if it was just the tens of thousands of the Lightning God's Whip fighting against the hundreds of thousands of the Roland army and also their team of skillful sorcerers, the city would be destroyed sooner or later.

However, Milo, behind the Roland army, was giving them a headache.

Tiger was confident of ending the battle at the Thunder City if the Roland army had a month's worth of time.

Milo's army had already left its line of defense at the plain. In an open area, their superior army should be able to defeat Milo's army. However, that would still take time.

Although Thunder City's defense was solid, the tens of thousands Lightning God's Whip were obviously outnumbered by the hundreds of thousands of Roland army. Tiger was confident of winning back Thunder City if he had sufficient time.

Unfortunately, the problem was still time. The food supplies left

in the army would only last for two more days.

Two days... Tiger could not help but laugh dryly. What is next? First, we go hungry. When we can no longer tolerate the hunger, we will start killing the horses. After losing the horses, the Holy Knights possibly could not even defeat the enemy's heavy armor infantries. After that, what would we do? Will we start eating people? Hahaha... This is ridiculous!

The 'Sandwich Biscuit' battle lasted four days before the Roland army announced that they had given up.

Both sides sent messengers to and fro for a day. After that, the Radiant Empire's Regiment Commander, the Duke of the Tulip Family, announced the acceptance of the surrender conditions and ensured that the prisoners of war would not be slaughtered as Milo's actions had already caused a deep fear in the Roland army.

It was during that winter that the second crusade, that had lasted two months, finally ended.

At the city walls south of Thunder City, five hundred thousand of the Roland Continent Coalition Army surrendered to the Radiant Empire. The Northern Legion of Radiant Empire had accepted the surrender of the Roland army. In that war, the Roland Coalition Army had invaded with eight hundred thousand soldiers. Almost three hundred thousand perished while the remaining became prisoners of war.

Likewise, the Empire also paid a heavy price. Ten million gold coins had been spent on the war. Besides that, less than three hundred thousand soldiers remained of the four hundred thousand soldiers that went to the North. Among the casualties, the Flame Warriors had lost thirty thousand soldiers while the Northern Legion lost one hundred thousand soldiers. The elite Lightning God's Whip had fifty thousand soldiers before the war but after the war, they only had less than thirty thousand soldiers remaining.

Most of the Lightning God's Whip were killed in the final

'Sandwich Biscuit' battle, during the Roland army's last siege of the city.

The Empire had the time advantage and eventually won the battle.

At Thunder City, all the hundreds of thousands of the Roland army soldiers, including the Holy Knights, had put down their weapons. After that, they were put under custody of the fifty-thousand strong heavy infantry from the Northern Legion and twenty-thousand strong Lightning God's Whip. They were gathered at their original barracks. All the daily foods and supplies were sent directly from Thunder City.

Following His Majesty's summons, Sieg was left behind as the Supreme Commanding Officer in the front lines. Under the escort of ten thousand of the Lightning God's Whip, the Duke of the Tulip Family together with His Excellency Milo of the Northern Legion returned to the Imperial Capital.

The only unusual thing was that even during the ceremony of accepting the surrender of the Roland army, the Supreme Commander of the Empire, the Duke of the Tulip Family did not appear. The ones present at the ceremony were Sieg and Milo.

Milo received the sword from Tiger, the Commander of the Coalition Army of Roland Continent, while Sieg signed on the book stating the terms of surrender.

Ten thousand Lightning God's Whip cavalymen nervously escorted a tightly sealed carriage towards the Imperial Capital. The soldiers worriedly looked at the tightly-sealed carriage and thought to themselves. Is the rumor really true? Is our great commander, His Excellency the Duke, really sick?

Following the Emperor's instructions, the original welcoming ceremony was not carried out and a false date of the Duke's triumphant return was published by the newspaper. Tens of thousands of civilians of the Empire and the fans of the Duke of the

Tulip Family waited in vain. They were so disappointed and angry that they fought against the security soldiers. Meanwhile, the Duke of the Tulip Family and his carriage team had already sneaked into the Imperial Capital the night before.

There was a grand feast in the Imperial Palace but the Duke of the Tulip Family did not participate in the feast. According to the Empire's official statement, His Excellency the Duke was injured and needed to rest.

In that grand celebration banquet, Milo was the only one among the high-ranked generals from the northern war zone who attended. He was in the limelight. His good noble upbringing helped him to cope with the adulation piled by the nobles in the Empire. By being both noble and modest, he had the perfect image of a brave, young and loyal general of the Empire.

Marquis Garoline finally felt relieved when saw the smile on the Emperor's face and also the crowd surrounding his nephew. The public image of the Lionheart Family finally had turned for the better.

Taking advantage of the interval during the banquet, Marquis Garoline took his nephew to the side and carefully asked him about the Duke's injury.

The smile that Milo kept up throughout the night disappeared as he sighed and replied, "I don't know!"

"You don't know?" Marquis Garoline was surprised.

"It's true." Milo whispered, "In fact, Seth has not appeared for a very long time. He rarely appeared in front of anyone during the battle at Pamir Plain. I was in command the entire time until the decisive battle at Thunder City." At this moment, Milo frowned and continued, "I also have some doubts. That day, when he returned from the battlefield, he looked as if he did not have any injury. However, he then hid in the tent and refused to see anyone. Is the Paladin of the Roland army really so powerful?"

Marquis Garoline pondered for a moment and asked, "So, is it possible to interrogate that Paladin?"

Milo shook his head and replied, "The opponent's team of sorcerers and the Paladin had already escaped. At that time, the situation was very chaotic. When their army surrendered, the sorcerers, the Paladin, and the Senior Knights — those who could fly all flew away." Milo sneered, "Thunder City is not big. Although sorcerers are not able to fly long distances, it is still possible for them to fly to the beach from Thunder City. However, I am not sure if they could fly across the Straits of Thunder."

Garoline, the old fox, became silent for a while. After that, his eyes shined with a cunning look as he whispered, "Was Seth seriously injured? Perhaps, he would die?"

Milo shook his head and firmly said, "He will not die!" He had a strange expression as he continued, "I believe nobody in this world can kill him!"

Marquis Garoline looked at his nephew's expression before he sighed and whispered, "No matter what, we have won the war! His Majesty will reward you generously. If... If Seth is dead, then you would be the remaining and greatest hero of this war! Sieg does not have the support of a noble family and would not achieve much. Milo, have you ever thought about it? If Seth is dead, you would be the number one person in the Empire!"

Milo's body suddenly trembled and his eyes flashed as if he thought of something. After that, his eyes turned gloomy. He looked at his uncle with a complicated expression. He hesitated for a moment before saying, "My beloved uncle, I know you have high expectations of me... However, what you do not know is that after this war, I have a strange feeling about Seth... No, I should say about the Tulip Family..." Milo gave a long sigh before he continued in a low voice, "Perhaps in my entire life, I would not be able to surpass that guy, Seth. As for that family... they made me feel hopeless. They have a real power of appeal."

Milo's eyes then was a mixture of emotions. It was filled with respect, jealousy, disappointment, desperation but mostly admiration.

"You will never be able to imagine that kind of scene. As long as the banner of the Tulip Family was fluttering, millions of soldiers would worship it like they worship God. For the banner of the Tulip Family, those soldiers were willing to die without a trace of hesitation or fear. That kind of sincerity towards the Tulip Family, that craziness and absolute loyalty, was something we could never achieve!"

Marquis Garoline did not say anything. He looked at his nephew's expression and sighed.

The newspapers in the Imperial Capital were filled with the joys of victory. Every day, there was a large crowd outside the Duke's mansion and the security soldiers did their best to guard the Duke's mansion.

Under Andy's arrangement, news of the Duke's injury was slowly released.

As a result, there was an increase in the number of religious people in the Imperial Capital. Numerous civilians went to the church to pray. They prayed to the great God to bless the Empire's guardian for health and longevity. Outside the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family, there were also countless infatuated women silently praying while holding a blossoming tulip flower in their hands.

However, those people made sure they stood several tens of meters away from the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family as they were afraid of disturbing His Excellency the Duke, who was nursing his injuries, from resting.

Every day, a team of Royal Guards would visit the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family. It was said that His Highness the Emperor had personally dispatched the palace doctors to treat the

Duke's injuries.

The various newspapers, in the Imperial Capital, had also dispatched countless people to watch the Duke's mansion every day and night. Every day, the various newspapers would publish information about the Duke of the Tulip Family.

"News Report: According to one of the servants from the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family, His Excellency the Duke was already able to get out of bed yesterday! "

"News Report: Based on leftover of a beef steak at the rubbish dump outside the Duke's mansion and that steak was the Duke's favorite food, we think that His Excellency the Duke was recovering and had started eating."

"News Report: According to the younger brother of the wife of the nephew of the wife of the neighbor of the medical officer responsible for treating the His Excellency the Duke, he had already fully recovered."

Every day, the newspapers were filled with all kinds of news and speculations about the recovery of His Excellency the Duke. Various newspapers then began to blame other newspapers for reporting false news for the sake of their sales. With all the disputes, the public in the Imperial Capital became confused. Nobody believed in the news anymore, regardless whether it was true or false. One fine day, a newspaper boldly reported that His Excellency the Duke was gravely injured. An angry crowd then rushed to the newspaper headquarters and beat everybody up. After that, all the newspapers abstained from reporting...

Three days later, the Central Command of the Empire released the list of heroes of the war to be conferred awards by His Majesty the Emperor.

It was a lengthy and cumbersome commendation order... the only thing that drew the attention of most people was that, at least, the Duke of the Tulip Family was mentioned in the list of

commendation order.

"Duke of the Tulip Family - Seth Rudolph, Appointed as Marshal Commander of Central Command of the Empire!"

"Former Deputy Commander of Central Cavalry, General Sieg, is promoted to Regimental Commander of the Central Cavalry. He will also be conferred the title of Earl!"

"Former Regimental Commander of the Northwest Legion, General Milo, is promoted to Deputy Military Minister! He will also be conferred as an Earl..."

"Former Commander... Is given the title of..."

"Former Deputy Commander..."

After all the awards were announced, the grand ceremony was held in the Radiant Hall of the Imperial Palace. However, the Duke of the Tulip Family was still unable to attend the ceremony.

It was worth mentioning that among the lengthy awards, there was a humble name.

"Former Deputy Captain of the Duke's bodyguards in the Lightning God's Whip, Rody, because of outstanding performance at the battle in capturing the Thunder City, is transferred to the Imperial Guards. He is conferred with the noble title of Viscount and the position of Palace Warrior!"

Yes. 夹心饼干 jiaxin binggan. Sandwich Biscuits. It did not say 前后攻击 Qianhou gongji, for pincer attack.

Chapter 193: Ambiguous

The grand award ceremony was held in the Radiant Hall in the Imperial Palace. That was because the Empire had not won a large-scale war in a very long time. Moreover, that was a crusade. It was the first time in two hundred years since the Empire had a victory as big as wiping out eight hundred thousand Roland invader.

The award ceremony was on an extremely grand scale. The largest in two hundred years. The last time such a grand award ceremony was conducted was during the reign of Abbas the Great.

The Radiant Hall had never been so busy in the past two hundred years. There was no such scene in previous years, even on National Day.

The Radiant Hall that could accommodate thousands had already been filled with people. Everybody of prestige in the Imperial Capital had already gathered there.

Being an award ceremony, it was different from an ordinary banquet. All the men wore their uniforms instead of their ceremonial attire.

That night obviously belonged to people from the military. Those who wore military uniforms were looked at with respect. Their uniforms and the swords at their waists showed off their proud identities — I am a soldier.

All those who participated in the crusade and had been commended by His Majesty were present. There were a few exceptions including Sieg, who had been left behind in the North to deal with post war issues and also the greatest hero, the Duke of the Tulip Family, who was unable to attend due to his health. Everybody else was present and that included Rody.

Rody walked into the main hall wearing the uniform of an Officer of the Central Cavalry Regiment. He was surrounded by

both familiar and unfamiliar faces. It gave him a strange feeling. He had already met most of those people but right now, most of them could no longer recognize him.

His Majesty the Emperor has not arrived, yet. What is that old skeleton doing? Rody then curiously thought to himself. Could he be peeping from behind the side door?

The officers of the Central Cavalry came together. Kraft led the group into the hall, with Rody in the middle of the formation. They immediately attracted the attention of most of the people in the hall with the sounds of their leather boots, their resolute expressions as well as the killing intent that could only be acquired in the battlefield.

Most of the young aristocrat ladies could not help but secretly glance at them. Most of them focussed on Rody.

Among the dozen officers, Rody was the youngest. He had a tall and rugged body. The smart uniform of the Central Cavalry was stretched by his sturdy body. He walked with a majestic gait. His angular face and long blue hair made many of the young ladies' face blush.

Fortunately, that was not the first time Rody had experienced such a situation. He was very calm or, at the very least, he looked very calm on the surface.

As His Majesty the Emperor had not arrived yet, everybody in the hall was conversing softly with one another within their own circle. The moment Rody and the dozen high-ranked officers of the Lightning God's Whip arrived, they were immediately surrounded by the other nobles.

Everyone knew that after that night, most of the soldiers attending would become a military star. There was even a chance that one of them might become a powerful person in the army. They knew that the Lightning God's Whip was under the personal command of the Duke of the Tulip Family. If they could to win

over those people, then they would have already made connections with the Duke of the Tulip Family.

Milo and several his men from the Northern Legion stood on the left side of the main hall. They were also surrounded by a lot of people. At first, the Lionheart Family was facing a crisis. However, after that war, the Lionheart Family evidently had regained the trust of His Majesty the Emperor. Many hoped to take this opportunity to rebuild their relationship with the Lionheart Family...

Milo took his men to greet the Central Cavalry soldiers when he saw them enter. After fighting together in the war at the North, they had already formed a somewhat close relationship with one another. Those officers under Milo had high respect for the Lightning God's Whip. They had personally witnessed how invincible the Lightning God's Whip was in battle.

Out of habit, the officers from the Lightning God's Whip immediately saluted Milo. After all, in the North, Milo's position was only second to the His Excellency the Duke and His Excellency Sieg.

When the dozen of Lightning God's Whip saluted Milo, the surrounding people were surprised and envious. Milo felt proud and his icy-cold expression gradually became warmer.

Naturally, Kraft talked to Milo, as he was the highest ranked officer among the Lightning God's Whip present.

"Commander Kraft, how is His Excellency the Duke? Have you visited His Excellency the Duke?" Milo asked softly. In fact, he was also very concerned about the Duke's 'injury'. However, the relationship between both families was not good and it was not convenient for him to go and see the Duke. Even if he visited the Duke, he would not be able to meet the Duke!

Kraft's expression was gloomy as he replied, "Your Excellency Milo, we did go to the Duke's mansion but the one who greeted us

was Miss Nicole. His Excellency the Duke is currently cultivating and would not meet guests."

Rody stood at the outer periphery of their circle and listened quietly to their conversation. His eyes could not help but look around. There were too many people that could recognize him and he must act carefully.

From time to time, a noble from the Imperial Capital would arrive. The Imperial Guards would then announce the arrival of a certain baron, viscount, or other noble loudly. However, the following announcement instantly silenced the hall.

"The arrival of Miss Nicole from the Duke's family!"

As the announcement was transmitted into the hall, everybody instinctively stopped their conversation to focus on the door. Miss Nicole then walked in slowly. Her beautiful golden hair gently draped over her shoulders. Her soft snow-white shoulder-less evening gown seemed to set her off as a pure lily. She wore a silver waistband which seemed to accentuate her slender waist. Her dignified and beautiful but unsmiling face seemed to give a cold and elegant look.

When everybody saw Miss Nicole enter the hall, they had the same thought. Since Miss Nicole has arrived as a representative, then the Duke of the Tulip Family would not appear tonight.

Nicole slowly walked in and her eyes were looking at Milo's group. She then smiled gently and nodded her head slightly.

The Northern Legion soldiers and the Lightning God's Whip officers immediately stood straight. Milo looked in admiration before he also elegantly smiled back.

Only Rody knew that Nicole's smile was meant for him.

When they saw Nicole walk in, the Lightning God's Whip immediately left Milo's side and went to the side of Miss Nicole. Nicole's cold expression disappeared as she gently spoke a few

words with Commander Kraft. Kraft was so excited that he was almost trembling. The fearless man in the mighty army had become so nervous that he did not know what he should do.

The people in the hall were in various states of minds. While they were still secretly looking at Nicole, the arrival of another person was loudly announced.

Everybody quickly stopped talking and then stood upright.

"His Majesty the Emperor has arrived!"

'Abbas XI' slowly walked in, under the escort of several Imperial Guards. Rody immediately saw Sky who was standing beside the Emperor. That fatty secretly winked at him.

The following procedures were in accordance with the tradition of the Empire. In the spirit of respect for heroes who had contributed to the Empire, His Majesty the Emperor personally read out the names of those heroes. They then stepped forward to be bestowed the awards by His Majesty the Emperor.

About twenty people, who were to be conferred, knelt in the front of the hall. After His Majesty the Emperor finished calling out their names on the list, he walked up to the kneeling heroes and, one by one, placed a red gem sword on their shoulders. He then casually gave a few encouraging words before helping them wear their medals. Rody was the last person. When the Emperor walked up to him, Rody suddenly felt an ominous feeling.

Looks like there are some plans that Andy have not told me!

"Young man, you did very well!" The Emperor's voice was not loud but everybody could clearly hear his words in the quiet hall. Besides that, the Emperor had an affectionate expression and his eyes were filled with pride and love. Rody then heard the bastard affectionately said, "I am proud of you!"

I am proud of you!

I am proud of you!

What do these words mean? The tone used is what a proud father uses when talking to his successful son!

Mmmm! The hall suddenly seemed to hum like a beehive. Everybody in the hall started whispering to one another.

Who is this young man? Where did he come from?

They had originally thought that Rody was an officer from the Lightning God's Whip, but at that moment, they were even more interested and curious about his identity.

Rody was already a little muddled. For a moment, he could not understand what was implied in Andy's last few words. However, at that time, the Emperor had gently pinned the medal on Rody's chest. He then loudly said, "Let us enjoy the night! For the heroes of the Empire!"

As the hall cheered, the Emperor personally pulled Rody up and led him slowly to the back of the hall.

A group of performers for the Imperial Court entered the hall along with those carrying an abundance of food, exquisite tableware, and fine wine.

However, at that moment, nobody bothered to pay attention to these. They were still making guesses about the identity of that young officer whom His Majesty the Emperor had led away.

Some of them were so curious that they enquired around them. However, even the Lightning God's Whip and the Northern Legion were not clear about Rody's identity. The only thing they knew was that the young man was the captain of the bodyguards of the Duke of the Tulip Family.

Just a captain of bodyguards? Why does His Majesty the Emperor favor a simple captain so much?

Even Nicole, from time to time, looked anxiously at that door at the back of the hall. She was unsure of what they were doing. A few wealthy young nobles approached her, from time to time, to

strike a conversation with her. Nicole was the star of the night. She was a beautiful woman and the eldest daughter of the number one family in the Empire. She was also the older sister of the Imperial Marshall, the Duke of the Tulip Family and those nobles wanted to be in her good books.

Although a lot of young talented men approached her, Nicole was obviously not interested in them at all.

In the beginning, she reluctantly entertained them with a few words. However, after some time, Nicole started to furrow her eyebrows and it was evident that she was feeling impatient. She became fed up and started to look at them annoyingly.

Kraft and the Lightning God's Whip began to act. They firmly stood around Miss Nicole to obstruct all those that tried to approach her. The nobles looked at the ferocious officers who were also the heroes of the Empire. Naturally, the nobles were afraid to offend them.

When the Lightning God's Whip noticed that Nicole's eyes, from time to time, were looking at the door that His Majesty the Emperor had entered, they could not help but remember the incident when the Emperor proposed to Miss Nicole. Although the difference in age between His Majesty the Emperor and Miss Nicole was extremely big, it would still be a good thing if Miss Nicole were to marry the Emperor.

Two Wolf Fang officers that were present knew a little about His Excellency the Duke's reaction then. It seemed like the Duke was disgusted with His Majesty the Emperor's marriage proposal.

Finally, after a while, the back door reopened. Several servants walked out. They were followed by His Majesty the Emperor who seemed to be in a good mood, even smiling a little. Following behind the Emperor was Rody.

At that moment, Rody had already changed his clothes. His original smart uniform of the Lightning God's Whip had been

replaced with the standard attire for nobles. His long blue hair gently scattered behind his back but he looked like he was at a loss.

When Andy took him to the back, Rody thought that Andy wanted to say something to him. However, the old skeleton had only dragged him to the back to change clothes... Just a change of clothes!

What is this old skeleton up to?

The banquet had begun. Everybody looked curiously at the young man behind the Emperor. Who is he? Why is the Emperor so intimate with him?

In accordance with convention, the next event would be the first dance of the banquet. Based on the courtesy of the nobles, the Emperor would invite the Empress for the first dance. At that moment, the musical performers had prepared themselves and started to play a light and gentle music. When the Emperor casually clapped his hands, the crowd in the hall stopped talking and stood back to create a space in the middle of the hall.

"Everyone!" The Emperor said, "Tonight is a happy night. Let us sing our praises for the heroes of the Empire!" Only Rody felt something was wrong when he heard the Emperor's voice. He was too familiar with the old skeleton's tone. Every time the skeleton used that kind of tone, he was up to some kind of mischievous plan.

"Due to the Empress's poor health, she is unable to attend tonight's banquet. So, I will give this opportunity of the first dance tonight to one of the heroes of the Empire! Let this hero of the Empire replace me for tonight's first dance!"

The Emperor slowly looked at the audience after he finished speaking. All those that he looked at could not help but straighten their chests. This is a great opportunity! To replace His Majesty the Emperor as the first one to dance in the banquet is a supreme honor!

The old skeleton smiled happily and said, "So, I suggest... we let the youngest hero of the Empire invite the most beautiful woman in the Imperial Capital for the first dance, tonight!" He then smiled cunningly and said, "Rody, Miss Nicole, I suppose you will not reject my proposal..."

The audience went into an uproar.

Marquis Garoline, who was in the crowd, was surprised. He looked at Rody, who was standing beside the Emperor, and then he looked back at the Emperor's expression. He suddenly had a horrifying thought.

Could... Could this young man be... His Majesty's illegitimate child?

Rody looked at Andy in surprise. Although he did not speak, his eyes had clearly stated what he wanted to say. What are you trying to do?

Andy smiled faintly. He deliberately gave an affectionate expression and calmly said, "Young people do not need to be so shy... Child, I am proud of you tonight!"

Those words shocked everybody.

Marquis Garoline took a deep breath as his brain churned at high speed. Previously, His Majesty the Emperor did not appoint a Crown Prince. Even after the Empress was pregnant, His Majesty did not indicate the slightest intention of appointing a Crown Prince... This man is young enough to be His Majesty the Emperor's son... Ah, what was his name? Rody... I have not heard of this name before but he could actually enter the Lightning God's Whip at such a young age and is also the Duke's trusted subordinate... Hmmp... A young hero of the Empire and also the words 'I am proud of you'.

Marquis Garoline sighed and thought to himself. I am really stupid. Really stupid... This young man must be His Majesty the

Emperor's illegitimate child!

Chapter 194: Too Smart for Your Own Good

Despite feeling skeptical, Rody still walked to the front of Nicole. Applying the noble etiquette that he had learned, Rody stretched out his hand and extended a standard invitation.

A magnificent symphony then started...

He gently embraced Nicole's slender waist as the two of them happily and gracefully danced along with the light music. In accordance with the usual practice, the first dance was meant for His Majesty the Emperor to enjoy on his own. Naturally, the others could only just stand and watch from the side.

However, that kind of honor was not something an ordinary person can enjoy.

After dancing for a short while with Nicole, Rody started to feel uncomfortable. Countless eyes glared at Rody. Those glares were filled with envy, surprise, doubt, disdain, jealousy, and anger. Of course, most of them were still guessing Rody's identity.

All kinds of complex glares were directed at Rody, making him a bit nervous. He felt extremely uncomfortable and his hands that were holding Nicole also turned stiff.

"Relax..." Nicole was aware of Rody's nervousness. She quickly and softly whispered into his ears, "Do not worry about their gaze."

After she finished speaking, Nicole snuggled into Rody's embrace. She was completely relaxed and allowed Rody to spin her around in the dance. As she had followed a noble's education since childhood, she had much more experience on such occasions. Although that was a grand occasion and it was the first time she danced in front of such a large crowd, she was much less nervous than Rody.

Rody could feel Nicole's soft body in his arms and he could smell her familiar delicate fragrance. He could not help but relax. His

original stiff movements also became smoother.

The man was tall and stood straight as an arrow. The woman was beautiful and peerlessly enchanting. Everybody in the hall focussed on them especially since Rody had a mysterious identity.

Andy maintained his majestic expression as he sat on the throne. However, he was actually laughing out loud in his heart.

"Old skeleton, what are you so proud of?" When he heard Sky's voice, Andy knew that Sky was using a special method to talk to him.

"Damn Fatty, are you using a mind reading spell?" Andy secretly frowned. "Do you think you are so great for having a powerful 'Domain Force'? How dare you use the mind-reading spell on an old man like me? Are you not afraid that I would use magic to counter you?"

Sky laughed arrogantly but did not say anything. Andy also showed a cunning expression. "When did an old man like me ever learn how to dance? It is too difficult for me! Might as well just let this kid dance..."

Sky sighed and replied, "You are too mischievous... After your show tonight, people would be guessing what is the relationship between His Majesty the Emperor and this boy."

Andy laughed helplessly. "Me? I did not say anything. I only told him 'I am proud of him' and that's all."

At that moment, the audience applauded as the first dance ended. The dancing couple made a courteous gesture as expected with the noble etiquette and then walked off the dance floor.

The rest of the night was more relaxed. As it was a celebration banquet, there were not many rules. However, Rody had already been surrounded by all kinds of people.

It was a fact that one must be smart enough to get elevated to a high noble position in the first place. But they were still unable to

find out the relationship between that young man and His Majesty the Emperor. His Majesty the Emperor's intimate attitude towards him was obvious. Moreover, His Majesty took him alone to the back, just now. Although they did not know what His Majesty the Emperor had said to him, Rody had even changed his clothes when he came out. Isn't this enough evidence?

The Imperial Palace was not Rody's changing room!

Although that boy was currently just a viscount and just a small officer, so what? As long as he had received His Majesty the Emperor's favor, there would be no doubting his future status and wealth.

Rody was wondering why suddenly so many people were interested in him. Based on norms, Milo should have the leading role tonight! Since the Duke of the Tulip Family was not present, then Milo, who came from an influential family and at the same time he was also a great hero of the war, should have been the most outstanding person tonight!

Rody felt irritated when he looked around and saw that almost everybody wanted to start a conversation with him. What he wanted to do the most at that point in time was to be by Nicole's side. The dance the two enjoyed earlier filled Rody's youthful heart with a tender feeling. Everybody would definitely have a bit of romance in the heart. On top of that, they seldom had the chance to be together in normal days and that was the first time they had danced together so intimately in front of others.

What made Rody unhappy was, as soon as the dance ended, Nicole was once again surrounded by pesky suitors. Rody knew some of them. Most of them were young heirs of certain families. He looked at how they eyed Nicole. If it was not because the surrounding Lightning God's Whip guarded Nicole, they would have already swallowed her up.

Right now, the Tulip Family was thriving. As long as they could

build a relationship with the Tulip Family, then their status and future would be assured.

Honestly, Rody missed being the Duke of the Tulip Family. At that point in time, he would always be followed by several members of the Wolf Fang. They would be able to protect him and chase away the disgusting suitors.

This guy in front of me has a malicious smile. He probably just thinks of me as a treasure. On his left is another guy that looked as if he had already seen through me. I hope he does not have that kind of preference. This guy is even more outrageous. Why is he staring at my face?

Finally, somebody saved him...

"Viscount Rody." An old voice spoke out. Rody looked and his feelings of joy immediately sank. The person that had called out to him was Marquis Garoline.

Garoline laughed as craftily as a fox. He squinted his eyes and glared sharply. Those in front of him immediately gave way.

The old Marquis then walked up to Rody and smiled, "Viscount, you have contributed greatly to the Empire at such a tender age. You will definitely have a bright future!" After that, he affectionately patted Rody's shoulder.

Rody did not dare to give him the cold shoulder. Although he disliked that guy, he still maintained a gentle smile and saluted in the manner of a noble. After that, he smiled at Milo who was standing beside Marquis Garoline. "His Excellency Milo has been bestowed as an Earl. He is even more admirable."

As the three of them chatted, Milo gave a meaningful glance to his men and the officers from the Northern Legion immediately occupied a few spots surrounding them. They discretely edged out the other nobles, who were originally surrounding the three of them.

They made it clear that they wanted to dominate contact with that mysterious star.

As the Lionheart Family was in the limelight now, naturally nobody would want to find fault with the old Marquis.

Marquis Garoline spoke in circles in an attempt to find out more about Rody and his background. Rody had already prepared the answers to these questions. In fact, before he started using his own original appearance, he had already discussed with Andy about the various possible problems that might arise.

Marquis Garoline took quite a while before he realized that Rody was not willing to reveal his identity. Rody responded with some perfunctory replies. The longer the conversation got, the more amazed Marquis Garoline was of that young man in front of him. That young man's speech and manner had an unruffled calmness. Although his tone was quite gentle, his occasional gaze surprised the old Marquis. That was the habitual gaze of someone with a high position, someone with control of everything.

As the two continued to talk, Rody had the attitude of a subordinate who was respectful to a superior. However, he had a faint imposing manner that seemed to be on par with the crafty old man that had been in power for many years. When the Marquis and the Viscount stood beside each other, one of them was the Military Minister of the Empire while the other was just a middle-ranked officer. However, the feeling of Marquis Garoline was: this guy seems to carry a dignified manner. Garoline knew that that was not something that could be faked so easily. It was something that you acquire by cultivating for a long time, and practice until it became a habit.

In the end, who is this young man?

That was a question that Garoline would always ask. He felt more and more sure of his guess. He must be someone close to His Majesty the Emperor. This guy was young. His speech and

deportment seemed to indicate that he could not care less about others. The way he talked and his spirit was not something that can be learned. As far as he can remember, only an Imperial kinsman had this kind of disposition.

The current Emperor, Prince Barond, and also even Bayan, before he died, occasionally revealed this kind of disposition. However, they were not as natural or as refined as this young man...

Marquis Garoline became more and more surprised. He was unaware that he was more and more careful and gentle as he conversed with Rody. In the end, it was no longer like a superior warmly encouraging a subordinate. Instead, it was like two important people of the same rank casually chatting.

Towards the end of their conversation, Marquis Garoline unintentionally mentioned that in two days' time, Pope Corsica VI of the Empire would be in the Imperial Capital to interview the triumphant heroes. The heroes would also be awarded a medal from the Church. When Rody heard Marquis Garoline's words, his face revealed a disapproving expression. Marquis Garoline and a few others immediately noticed that Rody's expression had changed. He then smiled and asked, "Viscount, is it because of the interview of His Majesty the Pope..."

Before Marquis Garoline could finish, Rody glanced at him and calmly said, "I am a disciple of Master Autumn." Although his voice was calm, it was filled with respect.

Master Autumn's disciple?

Marquis Garoline's expression became disturbed. He then thought of the significance of Rody's words.

That day, Master Autumn had died in the hands of the Pope. The Emperor did not pursue the matter. Whether who was right and who was wrong, nobody spoke of that incident ever again. It did not matter if Master Autumn was a different race. After all, he was

our court warrior, in fact, a Chief Warrior. However, the Pope had described Master Autumn as a different race, one of the Kara clan. In such a case, it was not necessary for the Empire to turn hostile with the Church just because of Master Autumn, a court warrior. Although the relationship between the two was no longer as close as before, the war had reunited the Church and the Empire together.

However, Marquis Garoline was thinking of something even deeper.

Master Autumn's disciple? Master Autumn was a 'court warrior'! If he was Master Autumn's disciple, then where did Master Autumn teach him swordsmanship? It could only be in the Palace! What kind of talent was eligible and qualified to be Master Autumn's disciple?

Marquis Garoline knew that a court warrior was an Imperial Family's warrior. Not just anybody would be qualified to receive his teachings. Besides that, to become his apprentice, they must also have the approval of the Imperial Family.

Marquis Garoline then allowed his fantasy to run wild. A prince who had not come of age could only be taught swordsmanship by the court warriors.

He is from the Imperial Family! He is definitely from the Imperial Family! Marquis Garoline's eye muscles trembled. His face was still smiling but his heart was unable to stay calm. Perhaps, he was too clever for his own good. The more Marquis Garoline thought, the more complicated and abstruse it became. Finally, he could not help but discreetly look at the Emperor.

His Majesty the Emperor had not chosen a Crown Prince. This young man had an extraordinary disposition and was also Master Autumn's disciple. Did that mean he had always been living in the Palace? There must be a profound significance when His Majesty the Emperor pushed this person forward during the war after

having completely removed Prince Barond's influence.

Marquis Garoline changed his view on the situation. Rody had gradually lost his patience. He looked at the few annoying 'pests' gathering around Nicole. Sh*t. The gaze from one of them was becoming more and more wretched. Rody softly asked to be pardoned from the old Marquis and he then stepped away.

As Marquis Garoline was engrossed in his own thoughts, Milo who was beside him frowned. "Uncle, why does this Rody interest you so much?"

Marquis Garoline shook his head and looked at his nephew. He then replied, "Milo, you are the hope of our family's future. However, you are still a poor judge of character. You must pay more attention in the future!"

"Oh?"

The old Marquis nodded and slowly said, "Milo, I can tell you... we have found a treasure!" He then looked at Rody's back and continued with a soft but excited voice. "That boy is the treasure! I know you have an arrogant temper, but you must pay attention to him in the army and forge a good relationship with him! Remember that!"

Chapter 195: [Bitter Then Sweet](#)

The military office in the Imperial Capital was very busy in the past few days, dealing with the post war matters. Proper arrangements were made for hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war. Arrangements also were made for the civilians that lived in the North. While the Duke's strategy of luring the enemy was effective, the issue of restoring was no longer Rody's problem.

News, both good and bad, kept coming into the Imperial Capital.

Good news came from the northwest. The Northwest Legion under the command of General Elliot, the Empire's new star, had repelled the tenacious invasion of Reuenthal of the Great Moon Kingdom. Reuenthal was unable to accept defeat after General Elliot's earlier victory at Trier Fortress. He once again led his army to attack Watt Fortress. The Northwest Legion, led by General Elliot and the cavalries of the grasslands fought at Watt Fortress and both sides suffered losses. In the end, Reuenthal had to retreat with his tail between his legs. However, Elliot played a trick on his opponent while they were retreating. He dispatched about ten thousand light cavalries to ambush the supply units of Great Moon Kingdom. Although they called it an ambush, it was closer to harassment. After all, a cavalry of about ten thousand would not be any threat to the Great Moon Kingdom who had tens of thousands of cavaliers. Besides that, the Northwest Legion's cavalry was inferior compared to the grassland's heavy cavalry.

However, Commander Gieslund of the ten thousand cavalrymen was an excellent commander who remarkably completed General Elliot's task.

When Reuenthal's reinforcement army came to help, the Empire's ambush cavalry had already retreated. They only left behind the ambushed supply unit. More than half of the supplies had already been burned.

At the end of the north crusade, the second war in the Northwest Region also ended. After losing their Roland allies on the battlefield, the Great Moon Kingdom wisely requested to make peace with the Empire.

However, this time, the peace talk conditions would depend on how much the skeleton wished to extort from the Great Moon Kingdom.

Besides the news of the victory in the Northwest, there was another major news. The Duke of the Tulip Family had taken leave from His Majesty the Emperor and returned to his manor in the Westwood province to rest. Everybody guessed that the Duke's injury was even more serious than they had imagined.

That news had caused some people in the Imperial Capital to feel restless. Fortunately, news of the victory in the Northwest had eased off that atmosphere.

Finally, after three days, the Duke of the Tulip Family and his beautiful older sister left the mansion of the Duke of the Tulip Family in the Imperial Capital. Of course, the mansion was now known as the mansion of Marshal Duke of the Tulip Family.

Under the escort of a group of Wolf Fang soldiers and Imperial Guards, they left the Imperial Capital and journeyed to the Westwood province.

The Wolf Fang was known to be under the command of the Duke of the Tulip Family. Their actions of escorting the Duke was naturally not met with any criticism. However, the presence of the team of Imperial Guards was unexpected.

His Majesty the Emperor seemed to really favor the Tulip Family. He even ordered the Imperial Guards specialized in protecting the Imperial Family to safeguard the Duke of the Tulip Family...

Marquis Garoline also had a more detailed information regarding that. The captain of these two thousand Imperial Guards was the

newly appointed Court Warrior, Viscount Rody!

"Looks like, His Majesty is using a different approach to win over the Tulip Family..." Garoline's expression was somewhat complicated.

Milo frowned and asked, "Uncle, should I dispatch some people to carefully investigate this Rody?"

Marquis Garoline shook his head and said, "Investigate? Don't forget, he is His Majesty the Emperor's man...And maybe he is... Investigate him? Can you guarantee that your action would not be noticed by others? If His Majesty the Emperor found out that we are investigating Rody, what would His Majesty think? This is the kind of things that cannot be investigated as it involves privacy of royalty. Even if you know, you have to pretend not to know. If you do not know, it is best not to ask any question!"

Rody was wearing the armor of the Imperial Guards and was riding in the middle of the Imperial Guards. Rody was not familiar with the other Imperial Guards around him. In just a few days, he already became their superior. Obviously, those people were very respectful of Rody and even revered him.

In fact, since the award ceremony, rumors of that young hero of the Empire had spread extremely quickly. Although those kinds of news could not be openly written about in the newspapers, it had still quickly spread throughout every corner of the Imperial Capital.

At that moment, many officers and soldiers of the Imperial Guards suspected that their young superior was in some way related to His Majesty the Emperor.

After all, the personages of the upper ranks of noble society and the Imperial Family usually have many mistresses. It would not be unusual to have one or two illegitimate children. However, His Majesty the Emperor's skill at concealing that was really admirable.

The East was covered with miles of clouds while the West had turned red with the setting sun. The clouds in the sky looked like a greenish gray sheer canopy. Rody took a deep breath and with a relaxed feeling looked at the wonderful sight of the horizon. After that, he sighed.

He felt extremely relaxed after leaving the Imperial Capital. Since the start of the war until then, he hardly had time to rest. Now, he had some free time; no nobles nearby eagerly watching him, no war and no political squabbles. He was just accompanying his beloved to Westwood. Since the 'Duke of the Tulip Family' was there to recuperate, he could just treat it as a holiday.

As he was thinking about himself, a horse immediately rushed up from behind. One of the Duke's guards went to Rody's side and said, "Lord Rody, His Excellency the Duke invites you to see him in his carriage."

Rody nodded and smiled. While being looked at with envious eyes, Rody turned his horse around and rode back to the carriage at the back.

A huge carriage was in the middle of the cavalry formation. The carriage was specially modified and was two to three times bigger than an ordinary carriage. Its windows were sealed because His Excellency the Duke could not be exposed to the wind until his injury had healed.

The driver of the carriage and the Wolf Fangs who were guarding the carriage were all the personal bodyguards of the Duke of the Tulip Family —these warriors were those that had been transformed into vampires.

The Wolf Fangs and the Imperial Guards looked at Rody enviously. It looked like the Duke really value this young man. Everyone has not seen the Duke for a very long time, but the Duke will only call him into the carriage to discuss some matters for a very long time every day...

However, that was not surprising as the young Viscount was originally the Deputy Captain of the Duke's bodyguards. Naturally, he was the Duke's trusted subordinate.

Rody took a deep breath and gently tapped on the door of the carriage. Immediately the door slowly opened a little. A pair of white and fair hands gently held the door open and a beautiful face came into view.

Nicole gently looked at Rody, smiled and softly said, "Come in, Lord Rody."

Once the door was closed, Nicole snuggled into Rody's arms. Rody held Nicole and gently sniffed her aromatic hair. He held her face and whispered, "Why did you call me in again? This is not too safe. Others may suspect something. Didn't we agree to wait until we reach West Hill where we would have more opportunities to meet then?"

Nicole shook her head and revealed a reluctant expression. "You wouldn't understand. Being alone in this carriage is extremely suffocating! Although it is said that I am inside this carriage to take care of the His Excellency the Duke... Sigh... I cannot even open the windows of this carriage." Nicole then raised her head and looked tenderly at Rody. "I want you to sit with me!"

Rody's heart turned soft. When he looked at her beautiful face in front of him, he could not help but bend forward to kiss her and whispered, "Alright, I will accompany you." He smiled and softly said, "The scenery outside is really good. We have already entered the Westwood Province. The Tulip Family's fief is really a wonderful place. We passed by a large river just now. The scenery at the river was very beautiful."

Nicole smiled and gently leaned on Rody's chest. They held each other as they sat in the carriage. Nicole closed her eyes as she lazily rested the back of her hand on Rody's waist. She softly whispered, "That large river? [That must be the Red River](#). It is the largest river

in Westwood. I often played there when I was younger. I could still remember the time father often took us there..." Although her eyes were closed, she had a sweet smile. "When I was younger, I liked to run barefooted in that river. The water was clear and cool ..."

Rody gently stroked her hair and smiled as he said, "Well, it must be very beautiful."

Nicole opened her eyes and asked, "How do you know it must be very beautiful? You have never seen it before."

Rody turned his eyes and laughed, "I meant that your feet must be beautiful. I have never seen the river but I have seen your feet before..."

Nicole's face turned red. She bit her lips and cursed, "You have learned bad things! The previous Rody would not say this kind of things!"

"Haha..." Rody laughed, "Is it really bad to say that? Last time, when you kicked me, I had already seen your feet..." Rody then looked at Nicole's shy face. Smelling the delicate fragrance of a woman, he could not help but hold Nicole in one hand and stretched out the other towards her feet. He then laughed and said, "Here, this is the foot you kicked me with!"

Nicole was about to refute when she suddenly realized her foot was caught by Rody. She could not help but whimper. She did not struggle but her face turned even redder. She looked at Rody and said, "At first, you were just a thief that broke into my family home. If I did not kick you, then what..."

Before Nicole could finish her sentence, her mouth was already blocked. Rody was already pressed against her body and could not help but kiss her soft lips.

Not knowing for how long, Nicole finally gasped for breath and said, "You... You are really too bold. There are so many people outside, aren't you afraid?"

"What is there to be afraid of? The wall of the carriage is so thick, they would not be able to hear anything. Besides that, you invited me in here. Are we just going to sit here and chat?" Rody whispered and smiled. He then became serious and said, "Nicole, I know you are bored. However, very soon, we will reach West Hill and then we can be together. At that time, I will use Rody's identity to publicly pursue you. After that, we could openly be together!"

Nicole spat and gritted her teeth, "Declare openly... really so important?" Her face was flushed. Her eyes were watery, with a small degree of fake anger but mostly shyness. This kind of look was so attractive that Rody could not help but gently kiss her again. He then whispered, "Then, I am going out now."

"Don't!" Nicole frowned and tightly grabbed Rody's clothes. She sighed. "You did not know. When you were in the North, I could not sleep every night. I worried about your safety in the North every day and night. Even when you were in the Imperial Capital, you were in the Imperial Palace and were not always by my side. Every day, I stayed in my room claiming that I was 'accompanying' my brother, the Duke. In fact, I was bored to death!"

Rody gave a wry smile. "We had no choice. Didn't I travel by carriage to visit you every day? It was ridiculous as some people thought that I was a medical officer dispatched by the Emperor..."

Nicole shook her head and said, "Anyway, when we reach West Hill, I want you to accompany every day and every night..." When she said 'every night', her face flushed and her voice was soft like the buzzing of a mosquito.

Rody's heart trembled as he looked at Nicole's red face. His breathing gradually became faster and he held Nicole's hands tighter. He kissed her hard and then whispered, "What... What did you say?"

Nicole shook her head. Although she was shy, her expression was

firm. "I don't care. I just want to be your woman... When you went to war, I... I was worried about you..."

Rody took a deep breath and said, "You are my woman. Nobody can take you away from me!"

The two of them embraced each other for a while. Rody knew that if he did not leave then, he would not be able to control his feelings. He then cleared his throat and gave a wry smile. "Alright, I have to go out now. Wait patiently. We will reach West Hill soon."

Nicole nodded and sat up from his arms. She then took out a silver bottle and gave it to him. She whispered, "This is today's medicine. This is the last bottle. After drinking it, your voice will change completely. In future, you will no longer need to worry about those who are familiar with you, as your voice will not be the same as the voice of the Duke of the Tulip Family anymore."

Rody took the bottle and drank its contents. He then gave a wry smile and said, "This medicine is really bitter. It is more bitter than the medicine you made me drink at that time."

Nicole glanced at him and said, "That medicine was to make you sound like Seth. It was meant to make you sick! Now... Now I cannot bear to let you experience that kind of hardship, so I put in a lot of effort to concoct this medicine."

Rody licked his lips and frowned, "It is really bitter... It is not good to be so bitter. Need a little bit sweetness!" He ignored Nicole's exclamation as he pecked her on her lips and then laughed, "Now this is better. Bitter first then sweet later."

Just like that, every day passed similarly, 'bitter first then sweet later', as they traveled to the capital of the Westwood province, West Hill City.

A Chinese proverb which could mean 'To first suffer hardships so that you could enjoy its benefits later'. Literally, it would be 'Bitter

first, sweet later', much like Rody's situation

沱沱河 Literally it is the TuoTuo River. There is a real river with the same name. It is also known as Ulan Moron (Red River in Mongolian) or Tearful River in some sources cited from Wikipedia. I chose Red River because it sounds simple.

Chapter 196: Conflict

Westhill City was the capital of Westwood Province, the Tulip Family's fief. It was also an important and bustling commercial city of the Empire. It could also be considered the Tulip Family's main headquarters.

The entire city had been waiting for the Duke's arrival with excitement. They were all given an unprecedented warm welcome at the city where the people regarded the Duke of the Tulip Family as a God and worshipped him. The only problem was that the Duke did not appear.

On the first day itself, Rody used the Duke's appearance to meet with the local representatives. His acting was good enough. At the very least he gave the impression that the Duke's health was not good. This was also because Nicole had given him a special medicine that made his body sweat continuously. When they see the Duke's pale expression, his weak voice and excessive sweating, they started to become worried for the pillar of the Empire.

After the reception, Rody went to the back and drank a lot of water. This is because Nicole's medicine had no antidote. Although he would recover in time, until then, he would sweat a lot and require a lot of water. The only thing he could do was to drink more water.

After he finished acting, Rody removed his mask and put on the clothes of the Imperial Guards. He then quietly left the courtyard of the Duke's mansion. The Wolf Fangs and the Imperial Guards that were responsible for escorting the Duke were arranged to live in the barracks not far away from the Duke's mansion. The barracks had a long history.

Every time the Duke visited his fief, he would take a few soldiers for security. Now that the Duke had become a Supreme Commander, it would be even more essential.

Rody had just returned to the barracks. He simply assigned his subordinates to patrol or guard the Duke's mansion. He then prepared to take a few people to go and see Nicole. From that day onwards, Rody would try and stay close to Nicole using his own identity.

However, the moment he went to the doors of the barracks, he saw a few Imperial Guards run in looking badly battered. One of them was yelling as if he was gathering more men. Rody frowned. He stepped forward and asked, "What happened here?"

The soldiers saw their superior officer and froze while the one that was shouting turned pale.

"What happened here?" Rody stood in front of them and shouted again. "Why are you making so much noise in the barracks? What battalion are you from?"

The soldier started to sweat and loudly said, "I am from the Second Regiment's Third Battalion. Just now, we were patrolling the streets. After that, we ended up entering a tavern and fought against other people. And..."

Rody gloomily looked at their injuries and coldly said, "After that, you were beaten up. Am I right?"

Rody's face was firm. The Imperial Guards were specifically delegated to protect the Imperial Family. They were usually arrogant. Some of them even developed some bad habits. Although Rody was only with the Imperial Guards for a short time, he had already felt the difference.

These soldiers had been the personal guards of the Imperial Family and must have considered themselves stronger than the average soldier. Although Rody was dissatisfied, this occurrence was quite normal. The Imperial Guards' position was higher than most of the other army, even the Lightning God's whip. It was not surprising that they would be arrogant. As long as they were strictly supervised and do not violate military discipline it would

not be too out of the ordinary.

They had already stirred up trouble the first day they arrived at West Hill. Rody was displeased and wanted to take this opportunity to discipline these arrogant fellows. However, the strange part was that there were people brave enough to beat up the Imperial Guards.

"Patrol? You went and patrol at the pub?" Rody sneered.

The soldiers immediately felt awkward and stood straight. One of the braver ones whispered hesitantly, "We were off duty, and were normally..."

Rody nodded his head and said, "What patrol were you talking about? Just say you were out on a stroll! What happened to your face?"

That soldier felt even more awkward and hesitated. He then said softly, "We were drinking at a pub and got into a conflict ... and then..."

"Who was it?"

The soldiers looked at each other as if they were too afraid to speak.

Rody laughed coldly and then said, "What are you looking at? You were beaten but dared not say who did it?"

"It... It was a woman! A beautiful woman!"

"Woman?" Rody's face sank. "You stirred up trouble in the pub?"

The soldier's expression changed the moment they understood what their commanding officer was thinking of. They immediately shook their heads and shouted, "No! No! Your Excellency! The few of us only went for a drink! We would never dare to assail women or do anything that violates military regulations!"

"Hmph..." Rody did not express his opinion and coldly replied, "Is that so?"

The other soldiers also quickly tried to explain. Among those few soldiers, the bolder one then said in a loud voice, "At first, we were just looking at her. We did not do anything else but..."

Rody raised his eyebrows and lightly said, "Stop muttering! Speak quickly in a straightforward manner!"

The soldier trembled as his mind became clear. He then told the whole story without stuttering.

"We were actually off duty that day. We left the barracks to wander around like we usually did in the past since we had finally reached West Hill and had time to rest. Besides that, West Hill was a big city so, we wanted to enjoy themselves." At that point of the explanation, Rody glared at the soldier and he started to speak faster.

"We looked for a pub to drink beer. Some people were at a table. Two of them were beautiful women and we could not help but stole glances at them. However, one of the women had a bad temper and scolded them." The soldier's face turned red as he continued his story. They were Imperial Guards. Although they were arrogant, they would not assail any woman. The guards had looked at others impertinently but they just sat there and drank their wine without causing any trouble. Rody calmed down a little and frowned as he asked, "In that case, how did you all end up like this?"

The soldier explained that the woman that was scolding them suddenly stood up and approached them. The soldiers initially thought she was a prostitute looking to have some fun but then the woman asked if they were Imperial Guards.

As the soldiers were proud of their position, they loudly confirmed it. Some of the soldiers even straightened their chests, hoping to look even more valiant and impress the woman.

The woman was very happy. She then asked the soldiers about whether the Imperial Guards were escorting the Duke and also

about other matters concerning the Duke of the Tulip Family.

"Oh?" Rody frowned. "She was asking about the Duke?"

One of the soldiers nodded and replied, "That's right! His Excellency is famous and popular. It is not surprising for a woman that admires him to ask questions. However, the question she asked became weirder. She kept asking about the Duke's condition, where he lives, and the condition of the manor... As we are responsible for guarding the Duke, we would naturally be suspicious of her from the questions she asked. She could have been a spy from the grasslands or the Roland army. So we wanted to make clarify things!"

"What happened after that?"

The soldier's face was red as he whispered. "We were ready to arrest and interrogate the woman but she..."

"What happened?"

"Before we raised our hands, she looked back at her companions and seemed to say, 'They are unwilling to speak. Should we capture and interrogate them?' They had used such outrageous words. How could we continue to sit still?"

Rody nodded and gave a puzzled look. "And then you started to fight?"

"Yes... We started to fight but..." The soldiers then looked at each other with an ashamed and angry expression. It was obvious who got beaten; their faces were bruised and they bawled as they came in the door just now.

"How many of them fought against your group?" Rody asked. These soldiers were quite strong although they were usually a little arrogant.

"Just... Just one! Just that one beautiful woman fought against us!" The soldier stammered.

Rody was stumped and frowned. "Just one person? One woman caused you all to end up like this? Is she a magician?"

"No..." The soldier hung his head. "She is not a magician. She is probably a warrior... but... she was not wearing a warrior's uniform. She also did not hold any weapons. She fought barehanded."

Rody nodded. Although he still had doubts in his heart, he loudly said, "Alright! A group of soldiers was defeated by a single woman barehanded! Take me there! Oh right. How many people were there? What do they look like?"

"They had a total of three people. Two women and a man. The two women were very young and beautiful and the one that fought with us was very skillful. The few of us were defeated in mere moments... The man at the back looked about thirty years old. We did not see his face clearly."

Chapter 197: Pink Panties

The pub was not far from the barracks. It was only two streets away. In fact, that pub was frequented by the soldiers.

Rody saw the sign from afar. His face sank from the first glance itself. It was not a good place to be. There were two large men that were obviously not good people standing at the entrance. Their clothes were bright and new but half of their hairy and tattooed chests were exposed. Their faces looked fierce. The only thing missing was a sign saying 'I am a bad guy'. Most likely these people were workers doubling as fighters.

Noises were audible through the solid door, mixed with the laughter and scolding of a woman and also the laughter and shouting of men.

The two fighters saw Rody approach from afar. They then noticed the two soldiers behind Rody. One of the thugs gave a meaningful glance to the other and the second thug then went in.

Rody had only brought two soldiers with him. With his current skills, he no longer needed to bring an entire group. With too many people around, it would be inconvenient for him to act.

The soldier with the swollen eye whispered, "This is the place. Those people standing at the entrance are people from the pub. They are obviously protecting that woman. After the few of us got beaten up, they threw us out. Besides that, the one on the left also kicked me!"

Rody did not speak. When he walked to the front of the pub, the thug blocked him and said, "Sir. We are closed for the day and is not accepting any more guests. Please go to a different pub!"

Rody ignored the thug and continued to walk inside. He coldly replied, "I am looking for someone." The thug stretched out his hands to block the way but suddenly, the thug then groaned loudly

as he flew away and crashed through the door of the pub, breaking it into pieces. He landed inside the pub.

The two soldiers behind Rody was surprised but then they heard Rody coldly say, "Look carefully. No one has ever dared to fight against my troops. The two of you must be more spirited! Be more like a man!"

He kicked aside the broken wooden door and then strode right inside.

The light in the pub was dim. There were a few people sitting at the tables that were scattered around the pub. Most of the guests were older men. Almost all the men were each cuddling a gorgeous woman with revealing attire.

The man at the door that crashed in earlier had smashed a table into bits. He could not stand up and was lying there, looking at Rody. Everyone's attention was directed at the door.

Rody walked in with large strides and looked at the surroundings. He could not help but frown. He then saw that at the central clear space of the pub a woman was still dancing, wearing even more revealing clothes that exposed her thighs and half her chest. Naturally, she stopped dancing and looked at Rody.

Rody turned around and asked, "You came to this place?"

The soldier replied, "Yes... We just came here to have fun."

Rody shook his head but he did not say anything. Rody did not like these kinds of thing but it was not a big problem. The soldiers were mostly men in the prime of their lives. They would feel bored staying in the barracks all day. So, it would be normal for them to go to these kinds of places to relax and burn off excess energy.

After sighing deeply, Rody ignored the sharp looks of the onlookers and loudly asked, "Who beat up my soldiers just now? Stand up!"

"Ah!" At this moment, all the women in the men's arms, as well

as the dancer, reacted. The women jumped and screamed. They held onto their clothes that were in disarray as they ran to the back. When the women ran off the men could not do anything. The fun atmosphere was destroyed. They had only touched the thighs of the woman and were about to explore further... They then got extremely angry. Two men jumped up and cursed as they rushed at Rody.

Rody did not spare them a single glance as he kicked them away. They flew and smashed onto a wooden platform. Some bottles of wine were also broken and the pub immediately reeked with a strong smell of alcohol.

After that, there was a whistle and seven to eight people that looked like fighters charged in from the back. They all carried a sword each and the entire pub suddenly carried a murderous atmosphere.

They were led by a middle-aged man who shouted, "Which barracks are you from? How dare you come here and cause trouble! Don't you know what place this is?"

Rody coldly looked at him and said, "You dare to fight against Imperial Guards! Hm... You even dare to carry weapons! The law of the Empire states that those who are not warriors or soldiers are not allowed to carry weapons! You truly have a lot of nerve!"

The middle-aged man no longer spoke and gave a meaningful glance to the others. Seven to eight thugs then rushed over while the surrounding guests jumped up, screamed and hid in a corner. Some who were too slow to run had crawled under the tables.

There was screaming as the thugs were all easily defeated by Rody. They fell one after another from just a few simple waves of his hand. They groaned miserably and could no longer stand back up.

He then looked at the ashen-faced middle-aged man and coldly asked, "Are you the boss here? Where is the person who beat up my

men earlier?"

The middle-aged man was shocked. He looked at the young man in front of him and then at his own subordinates sprawled all over the ground. He trembled and could not say a single word. Rody was impatient. He lifted the man up after grabbing him by the collar and shouted, "I asked you. Where is the one who fought against my men?"

The middle-aged man had eyes full of fear as he looked involuntarily at the narrow stairs near the walls of the pub. Rody hmped and released the man. He then strode towards the stairs. The moment he reached the bottom of the stairs, he heard a soft and pleasant voice coming from above. "Who is tearing up my place downstairs?"

Footsteps came from the stairs as a seductive figure walked down.

Standing on top of the stairs, a girl was looking at Rody — more accurately, she was a woman. Her age could not be discerned from her appearance. She had a coquettish face and alluring eyes. Her eyes were peach colored and she had rosy lips. Her beautiful wavy hair hung down her head loosely with a lock draping over her eyes. She blinked lazily at Rody as if she had not fully woken up.

A gown carelessly hung on her, loosely tied with a silk ribbon at her waist, with her well-endowed breasts half exposed. Looking at the two exposed snow-white hemispheres some would worry that the gown was too loose —it might just slip off at any time.

As she looked down ...

Rody did not dare to look anymore!

The robe was certainly large enough but it was too short! Her white and slender legs were exposed but not a trace of fat could be seen. Her thighs looked sturdy and captivating. The robe barely covered her thighs at all. Just by looking up a bit more, Rody could

see her pink colored underwear.

Rody was a young man. He quickly lowered his head as his murderous face turned a little red.

As the woman walked down the stairs, her thighs swayed on the stairs. She slowly walked towards Rody. But as she slowly walked down her stairs, her robes opened up a little bit more. It seemed to slide and roll off her smooth and round ...

She walked past Rody and glanced at Rody. She yawned lazily and said, "Are you the one causing trouble here?" Her voice was extremely gentle. It was a simple question. But it had the tone of an indulgent lover. It could melt anyone's heart...

As if she was not demanding an answer from Rody, her hand stretched to the back of her head and grabbed her scattered hair. Then she took out a thin ribbon from somewhere and banded her hair — but there were no pockets anywhere on her...

Her action of tying her hair attracted a lot of attention from the men. This action would make her naturally push her chest out such that the two towering full hemispheres in her chest would create a captivating deep cleavage in the middle.

As if aware of the men's gaze, she pursed her lips and looked in disdain as she said, "Men..." She then casually gathered her robes about her. Her actions caused the men to sigh with regret.

"Hey. You. Young man." The woman glanced flirtatiously at Rody and laughed lightly. "Why are you causing trouble at my place?"

As she spoke, she looked for a chair to sit. She then crossed her legs, her white thighs looking very seductive in the dim light. Rody still did not dare to look up — from his position he could see the pink underwear in between her legs.

Chapter 198: Heart of Stone

What are flirtatious eyes?

She was sitting on a chair. Her eyes were like invisible threads that tie up the heart — they were definitely a kind of formless killers!

Rody was nervous and tried his utmost to calm down. He was very powerful and murderous, but then, he was still a virgin. Although he was deeply in love with Nicole, he had never seen a woman's body at such close proximity...

The woman stared at Rody for a few seconds before she asked, "You broke my door and hurt my men. Why? Please tell me why."

Rody took a deep breath and tried to make himself look serious. However, he still did not dare to look at her. It did not seem appropriate, from where he was standing.

"One hour ago, my men were injured at your place! The people who hurt my men should be one of yours."

"Oh..." The woman nodded. Her captivating cheeks made her smile look very charming. She then said in her soft and gentle voice, "So officer. You took your men back to this place?"

Rody was impatient and he also felt suffocated.

He had brought his soldiers back there angrily but did not expect to meet a woman like her, with that flirtatious appearance. He found it hard to beat or scold her. Punching her would be like punching cotton.

"Yes." Rody raised his head and narrowed his eyes. "A woman did it." His tone turned cold as he continued, "My men are Imperial Guards! Even if they had caused trouble, this should be handled by the security guards! Your people must be really bold to dare raise their hands against the Imperial Guards!"

The woman did not feel anxious and casually asked, "So, how do you want this to be handled? You have already hurt a dozen of my men the moment you arrived..."

Rody grunted and coldly said, "Your men attacked me first. They deserve it! Bring out the people that injured my men. I do not like people playing games with me!"

The woman laughed. "You said that the person who injured your men was a woman. I have a lot of women here... If you wish to look for someone, do it yourself." After that, the woman clapped her hands and said, "Girls. Come on out, all of you!"

The women that ran away from the fight earlier heard the call and came in from the back in twos and threes, their faces smiling. The fear on their faces had already been swept away. These girls then stood around Rody.

The proprietress then said softly, "Alright now. Look for the girl yourself. Identify that girl who beat up your men. Do it yourself!"

Rody frowned. The women that appeared wore heavy make-up and clothes that were more revealing compared to the proprietress. Their shoulders and legs were exposed. Rody wondered if the things some of the women wore could even be called clothes. The bandages the soldiers used on the battlefield had more material than their clothes!

Rody's face sank as he gave the two soldiers a meaningful glance. The two soldiers could not help but glance at certain parts of the women's bodies. Rody's face turned pale and he coldly shouted, "Are these the ones?"

The soldiers trembled and immediately looked away. They then said, "No! She is not here! That woman was more beautiful than all of them!"

"Aiyoh!" The proprietress laughed out. "My girls here are not beautiful? Your words really hurt!"

Rody became even more impatient and said, "I do not have time to go around in circles with you! Are you the boss here? If so, follow me back! I have ways to make you speak!"

The woman's expression changed a little but she still laughed and said, "You want to arrest me? Sure. Why don't you try..."

She stood up and looked coldly at Rody's two soldiers. The two soldiers' faces turned red and they looked down. They had a hesitant and fascinated expression. They did not dare to step forward.

Rody coldly said, "What are you doing? Didn't you hear my orders? Arrest her!"

The two soldiers were startled and finally stretched out their hands. The woman smiled and also obediently held out her hands. She looked as if she was waiting for the soldiers to grab her. However, her hands suddenly emitted sparks. The two soldiers screamed the moment they touched her hands and fell to the ground.

The other women covered their mouths and snickered. It was as if this scene was common. They stood at the side of that woman as though they trusted her. There would be no trouble with her around.

Rody frowned as he looked at the two soldiers on the ground. He did not feel angry and laughed instead. He said, "Good! Looks like you are a magician! Just now there were people here asking about the Duke! Looks like things are really not so simple." After that, he walked up to her.

The woman raised her eyebrows and chest as she looked at Rody. She sweetly said, "What's wrong? You want to raise your hand against me as well? Come on then..."

She welcomed Rody and walked forward to him, purposely pushed her chest up high, her hands outstretched, and her legs

apart, and stood there in front of Rody forming the word '[Big](#)'

Rody did not like to beat up women. He hesitated for a moment before he pulled her arm. The moment he pulled her, the woman fell into Rody's arms as if she was extremely soft and had no bones. She raised her head and said, "You are very strong..."

Rody felt his scalp tingle and could not help but step back. The woman laughed and pointed at Rody's nose as she said, "This young man is quite strong. Looks like he is still a virgin."

Rody groaned and stretched out his hands towards her chest. When his hand moved, the woman was stunned for a moment. She only screamed the moment Rody's hand touched her chest. She quickly attempted to run away and hide.

"Hmph... Looks like you are just putting on an act!" Rody's hand moved and grabbed her shoulder to prevent her from struggling. Her shoulder felt slippery and soft. Without changing his expression, he grabbed her ankle and lifted her up.

The charming beauty screamed when she was lifted by her leg like a chicken.

Her robes were also lifted. Her other leg kicked around and her round buttocks and pink underwear were also exposed.

The group of prostitutes at the side were screaming nonstop. They wanted to pull Rody but then they saw Rody's stern expression. Rody then drew his sword and fiercely thrust his sword into a table. The men and women around them turned pale and retreated.

Rody coldly asked while he was still carrying the woman in his hands. "Are you going to speak now?"

The woman he was carrying no longer appeared calm and seductive as she struggled and shouted, "You bastard! Let me go! Otherwise..."

Rody then coldly interrupted her and said, "Good! Struggle more!

Perhaps your robes would fall off!"

These words were more effective than anything else and the woman stopped struggling. She shrank into a ball and even shivered a little.

Rody's expression did not change and he coldly said, "I am not someone who shows pity to women! I have killed both men and women! Don't make me angry. Now, I will ask you questions and you will answer them. Understand?"

The woman was silent for a moment before she answered with a red face, "I understand." That red face was not put on to charm anyone but was due to the blood flowing down to her head...

"Very good." Rody nodded. "What is your name? Is this your pub?"

"I... My name is Nedis. This is my pub."

Rody nodded and asked a different question, "Where are the people who fought my men?"

Nedis stayed silent for a moment before she loudly replied, "I do not know them! They are most likely my guests and have left."

Rody shook his head and shouted. "Lies!"

He placed Nedis face down on the table. He pulled out the sword from the table and also he lifted up her robes, revealing her backside.

Nedis was really afraid now and was about to cry. Although she had acted flirtatiously, it was meant to work together with her spell so that she could deal with troublemakers. She did not expect the young man to be stiff like a piece of wood and not be mesmerized by her spell. The young man was not affected by her spell and instead easily overpowered her.

Another thing that almost made Nedis faint was that the young man was taking advantage of her. He took out his sword and had

lifted the hem of her robes. She was even more scared by the thought that the man had some freakish masochistic preferences...

Rody's large hand tightly gripped Nedis' two small hands at her back. Without showing any mercy, he swung the flat side of the Dragon Fang sword at her backside.

A loud and crisp sound immediately echoed through the pub as a red mark appeared on Nedis' backside.

Rody calmly hit her backside about a dozen times. Nedis could not help but cry out. Half of it was from the pain and the other half was from the shame.

"Do you still refuse to talk?" Rody's voice was as cold as ice. He spoke as if the person in front of him was an enemy on the battlefield instead of a crying woman.

"I won't talk! I won't talk!" Nedis cried out.

"Fine!" Rody did not care and continued to hit her another dozen times. Nedis almost fainted from the pain and her backside had become swollen. Rody was very heavy-handed. He punished the woman according to the corporal punishment of the army.

Finally, Nedis started to scream and when she could not struggle anymore she moaned. The soft sobs and cries somehow moved Rody. His hand involuntarily stopped hitting her.

"I will ask you again. Where are the people that fought my men and sneakily asked about the Duke's condition? This is a conspiracy. It is a crime for sheltering them! When my men fought with them earlier, your people also joined in! So you better not tell me that you don't know these people! I will always have a way to make you speak!" Rody's tone of voice became gloomier as if he was not talking to a crying woman.

Nedis gritted her teeth. Tears were still flowing down her face as she said, "The things you do to me today, I will pay it back to you a hundredfold! There is nobody who dare to bully me, Nedis, in West

Hill! Boy. Even if you are an Imperial Guard, don't think... Ah!"

Rody hit her again and then lifted her up like a sack and coldly said, "If you do not speak, I have other ways to slowly punish you! There are no prisoners that would not open their mouths in front of me!"

Nedis was carried on his shoulder while her two thighs were held tightly. Another thing that almost made her faint was that one hand was touching her backside. She started to struggle again like a fish out of water.

"Stop struggling!" Rody's following words made Nedis almost vomit blood. "Are you afraid that I would take advantage of you? You are about as old as my aunt! I am not interested in old women!"

When Rody wanted to walk out, the middle-aged man tried to stop him and was kicked aside by Rody. The two soldiers also struggled to get up and follow Rody.

The moment they left the pub, he softly ordered the two soldiers to run back to the barracks. He then calmly carried Nedis and walked leisurely in the opposite direction of the barracks.

Nedis was almost dizzy from her anger. Her clothes were also too short. If she covered the top, she would not be able to cover the bottom. Rody carried her through the streets and they were surrounded by countless people who were pointing and laughing. The lewd laughter of the tramps was particularly unbearable. Nedis almost spat out blood and her teeth also almost cracked from gritting too hard.

Rody walked faster and faster and finally turned a corner, entering a quiet and secluded road. This road looked quiet and there was nobody about. Nedis started to panic and her heart was beating really quickly. What is this boy trying to do by bringing me to a secluded place? This is not the way to the barracks... Could it be? Her heart was beating like a drum roll! Rody's earlier words

that he had no interest in her had really infuriated her. Calling a woman 'aunt' would also make them crazy. Women are like that. It does not matter whether the woman was beautiful or not. They cannot afford to let others publicly demean them. Although Nedis was older than Rody, she was only slightly older. She still did not want to be called an 'aunt'.

Even then Nedis was also afraid that Rody would do something to her. Rody noticed Nedis trembling and coldly said, "Relax! I am not interested in you! I have carried you through a few streets. I presume your friends would soon catch up with us."

The moment he said that he heard the voice of a boorish man. "Release her!"

The moment Rody turned, he heard a piercing sound in the air and something with a strong energy flying towards his face.

Rody's eyes flashed as he grabbed the object. He felt something jerked powerfully in his hand as he caught a wolf fang arrow.

The arrow was black and had a triangular arrowhead.

Rody looked at the arrow and thought of something. He looked at the direction the arrow came from and saw a robust man on a rooftop a few dozen paces away.

The man had a full beard and wore a gray robe. In his hands was a strange long bow.

The man looked at Rody in surprise as he never expected Rody to catch the arrow. He nocked another arrow, pulled the bow until a full moon shape was formed and aimed it at Rody. However, before he could release the arrow, Rody loudly exclaimed. "Darke!"

Darke was surprised to hear his name. He had never seen Rody's real face and could not recognize Rody. In his surprise, he let go of the bowstring, and the arrow shot out!

Rody's eyes lit up. This arrow was slower and he could even see the arrow's flight in the air... Darke was horrified when he saw the

second arrow get caught. His eyes almost popped out!

He roared, pulled out a sword from his waist and jumped from the roof... He had already seen the might of his opponent and knew that he was no match for him. However, Nedis was his friend. Now that his friend was captured he would try to rescue his friend.

After he roared, he slashed downwards. Rody took the arrow he was shot with earlier to ward off the attack. There was a breaking sound as the arrow was chopped off but Rody took the advantage to step further back. He stood there calmly and smiled sincerely at Darke.

"Darke... It's me!" Rody smiled. He ignored Darke's second slash.

As Darke's sword came down, Darke heard Rody's next few words. The moment he heard these words, he stopped immediately.

Rody said softly, "Tulip Family's ten-year promise!"

The raws described the limbs before saying her posture looked like the Chinese character 大 (big).

Chapter 199: Adoration

When Darke was in a daze, Rody jumped over. Although he was carrying a person on his shoulder his body moved lightly. The place he was originally standing on cracked with a crisp sound.

Rody stood on top of the wall on the side of the small road. Rody then raised his hand and hit Nedis' neck. She fainted without even groaning. Rody then smiled and said, "Diane. You still like to attack sneakily from the back?"

"Eh?" Diane then appeared out of thin air several paces away. She looked at Rody who was standing beside a wall and had a mixed expression of grudge and pleasant surprise.

Diane was in a daze as the person she was looking for had suddenly appeared in front of her. This caused her to feel a bit absentminded. She saw Rody jump down from the wall, smiled to her and stood right in front of her. She was shocked. She slapped her face several times. Then she realized she was not dreaming...

"You bastard!" In her anger, she was like a female leopard as she grabbed Rody's clothes and gnashed her teeth. "You... you just left us and Myka there? Do you know how hard we have been searching for you?"

Rody laughed awkwardly but he did not break free from her grasp. Darke showed a puzzled expression as he looked at Rody with a frown. He asked, "Diane. Who is he?"

Diane gnashed her teeth and replied, "Him? He is a scoundrel!"

Rody shook his head and whispered, "This is not the place to speak. We... Ah. Where is Myka? Are you all staying in West Hill City now?"

Diane was about to reply when she saw that Rody was still carrying Nedis. Nedis' proud body was still exposed in broad daylight. Besides that, Rody was holding Nedis' thigh. She could

not help but feel unhappy and coldly said, "You... Why are you still carrying her? Have you not had enough of her?"

Rody turned red and gently put Nedis down. He had just only made Nedis faint so he did not think of putting her down. He looked at Diane and Darke. Diane was gloomily looking back at him, unwilling to take over. Darke shook his head. He felt that Diane was being strange and sighed. He then stretched out his hands to carry Nedis. Rody finally handed over the problem. He then softly asked, "What about Myka? Is she with you?"

Diane gnashed her teeth and said, "I... I will take you there. She is nearby."

Darke frowned and glanced at Diane. Diane nodded towards him and whispered, "There aren't any problems. It is just someone feeling restless every day thinking of this bastard!" After that, Diane hid her own red face and said, "Darke. Take Nedis back first. I will take him there."

Diane, Myka, and Darke had been living in the Imperial Capital. Myka had made up her mind to follow Rody. She was just waiting for Rody to return from the battlefield. However, she had received news that the Duke was injured in the war. He no longer appeared in public after his triumphant return to the Imperial Capital.

Myka sorrowfully thought of Rody every day and worried for the safety of her lover every day. However, she could not do anything. She naturally could not enter the Duke's mansion. If even the powerful nobles were kept out of the door, a small woman like her would definitely not have a chance.

Diane feared nothing and was about to break into the mansion but she was stopped by Darke. He was firm and advised her not to mess things up. Even if Diane had sneaked in, she would not be able to meet Rody as he was staying in the Imperial Palace.

Rody's appearance at the ceremony had shaken the noble circles in the Imperial Capital. However, this matter had involved the

Emperor and his privacy, and therefore only the nobles knew. The public did not receive any of this information. Therefore, Myka and her friends would not have news of Rody. As for the newspapers ... they would not dare to mention about the Emperor's illegitimate child.

When they heard that the Duke was going to rest and recuperate in his province, the three of them decided to look for the Duke in West Hill. As they could not enquire the date the Duke was leaving, they immediately set out and had already reached West Hill a few days ago.

Nedis was one of Darke's friend. When they heard the news that the Duke had arrived in the city, they went to Nedis' pub to enquire. As the pub was close to the barracks, it was where the military officers usually go to have fun. As a result, it was also the most suitable location. However, Diane ended up fighting with an Imperial Guard which resulted in that previous incident.

As Rody and Diane continued to walk, Diane was telling him about the three of them. Finally, she asked, "Why did you not come and see us after returning from the battlefield? Did you not know that we... that Myka had been waiting for you every day?"

Rody shook his head guiltily and replied, "The situation in the capital is complicated. As I wanted to get rid of my identity as the Duke, I could not appear in public. I was thinking of waiting for a while before looking for you all."

Diane glanced at Rody silently. She did not hide the resentment in her eyes.

Both of them felt awkward and the atmosphere turned silent. After a while, Rody asked, "Who is that Nedis? She is somewhat weird."

Diane looked at Rody coldly and said, "Hmph. You see a beautiful woman and..."

Rody frowned and replied, "Nonsense! It is just that Nedis' behavior was somewhat weird. She had used a spell on me earlier. Is she a magician? But then, it's not quite"

Diane thought for a moment and said, "Nedis is Darke's old friend. When we arrived at West Hill, Darke took us to meet her. It was thanks to her that we managed to settle down... You..." Her expression suddenly changed and said, "You better not have any bad thoughts!" Rody smiled and did not say anything.

Diane and the others had stayed near the pub. Nedis had helped them to settle down there. After the fight at the pub, Darke felt worried. They sent Myka back then returned to the pub only to find that the pub was smashed and Nedis was arrested. He then began his chase.

Rody followed Diane through the small roads taking numerous turns. When they arrived in front of a compound, Diane said, "This is the place. You have not met for a long time... I will not go in." After that, Diane went away.

Rody shook his head feeling at a loss. He felt that Diane was acting strange but he could not think too much about it. He took a deep breath and pushed open the front door. He laughed bitterly when he pushed the door — it was locked from the inside. Rody laughed and jumped over the wall.

The compound was more spacious than he imagined. There was a small two-storey building inside. Rody went in and climbed up the stairs to a room.

He gently pushed open the door to the room and stepped in softly. The room had a very simple layout. There was a large bed and the windows were open. There was a breeze as the curtains slowly fluttered. Myka was lying down and quietly resting in the bed.

Rody quietly went to the bed and looked at Myka.

Myka's eyebrows were furrowed while she slept. It would seem that her dreams were worrying. Her face looked drained. A black robe was wrapped around her slender and curled-up body. The lower hem of her clothes exposed her legs. Her long black hair blocked half of her face and the rest of it was scattered on top of the pillow.

Rody quietly knelt in front of the window and quietly watched the beauty sleep. He then slowly stretched out his hand to stroke her face. Rody's felt a soft spot in his heart stir. He could not resist as he bent down and gently kissed Myka's face.

"Mmm..." The sleeping Myka slowly started to wake up. Her eyes slowly opened to look vacantly in her sleepiness. She glanced at Rody and softly muttered, "How hateful. I dream of you again." After that, she mumbled indistinctly and closed her eyes again...

"Hm?"

A few seconds later, Myka reopened her eyes, finally waking up. She was still lying down but she stared at Rody. She could not believe her eyes.

"Ah!" She shouted and jumped from the bed. When she saw Rody smiling at her, she became fully awake. She cried out as she tightly clung to Rody.

Rody felt Myka's soft body trembled and the clothes at his shoulder got wet with tears. He slowly pushed Myka away while holding her face. Tears could be seen in her eyes. Her tender gaze made Rody feel crazy.

"I finally see you! I finally see you!" Myka repeatedly said these words. Her eyes were filled with joy and sadness.

Rody could no longer endure it. The feelings of love in her eyes were something that even idiots could see. He then kissed Myka on the lips...

It was the first time the two of them kissed affectionately. Myka

trembled as if she had an electric shock. She hugged Rody's neck and then they fell onto the bed.

Rody embraced Myka tightly. The soft and sweet body was full of temptation. Her lips were cold and soft and were fragrant as the petals of a flower. Rody felt his body was on fire. His innate yearnings were getting more intense.

Pressing down on Myka's body he ravaged her gentle lips. Rody's hands slide down from Myka's shoulder into her jacket.

Under her black robe, Myka's skin was delicate, smooth and supple. When Rody touched her skin, Myka could not help but cry out. As her mouth was blocked by Rody, the sound was made with her nose. Her moan seemed to have lighted up a fire. It made Rody even crazier.

Rody held Myka's slender waist and moved his hand to the back of the waist. It was probably due to years of dancing practice but her soft waist was strong and did not have a single trace of fat. Rody could not help but held her around her waist. He let her soft body lean on himself. He gradually moved his hand up and cupped her breast, causing her to moan...

Myka's body was at first cool but it gradually turned hot as if she had a fever. She twisted her body and wrapped her smooth legs around Rody.

Their lips finally separated when they were out of breath as they looked at the fire in each other's eyes.

Myka took a deep breath and whispered, "Am I... am I dreaming?"

Rody shook his head and replied, "I am sorry, Myka. I... I took a long time to come and see you."

Myka laughed calmly and said, "You don't need to say more... I have already made up my mind that I would wait for you no matter how long it takes."

They once again clung tightly together. Rody could smell Myka's fragrance. He could not help but kiss Myka's face and neck repeatedly. Myka was breathless and moaned. She tightly wrapped her arms around Rody's neck.

Rody's hands suddenly left Myka's chest. It moved below the chest and to the waist. As the hand continued to move lower slowly, Myka suddenly trembled violently and whispered, "No. Don't..."

Rody's blood boiled and did not hear Myka. She then struggled harder and begged, "Don't be like this. Really. Don't..."

When Rody felt her struggling, his arms froze and he got up. He then looked into Myka's eyes and said, "Sorry."

Myka bit her own lip and reached out to Rody's neck. She then pulled him down and snuggled in his chest. Her face was red and her voice was soft. "Don't... don't misunderstand. I am willing to give in to you but... Not right now."

"No. No. No..." Rody's eyes showed a hint of guilt as he whispered, "It was my fault. I have offended you."

Myka felt anxious. Her eyes welled with tears as she said, "No... It is not what you think. I think of you every day. However, today is not a good day. Please wait for two more days."

Myka smiled shyly when she saw Rody's confused expression. She then whispered into his ears, "I... I don't feel too good today. That is why they let me come back here to rest first. I ... will be fine in about two days." Her voice then turned softer as she said, "In two days, you can ... do whatever you like."

Rody frowned. His arms held on tightly to Myka arms as he asked, "You don't feel good? Are you sick?"

Myka immediately blushed. She looked at Rody lovingly and said, "You fool!" She then whispered something to Rody. Rody's face turned red and quickly sat up and hugged Myka.

The two of them were locked in an embrace as they sat at the bedside. Myka explained about her trip to West Hill from the Imperial Capital. She explained in a very simple manner. However, Rody looked at her sallow face with some pity.

Myka had grown up in the brothel. She had never experienced the hardships of a long journey. When Rody saw that her face had become thinner, he leaned over and kissed her on her forehead.

Myka snuggled up to the person she had yearned for day and night. She felt extremely happy and was no longer dejected. She then asked about Rody's experience.

Rody felt helpless and described the events of the war in the North simply. He understood and sympathized with Myka. He did not dare to speak of the dangers in the North. At critical points of his story, he would just mention it quickly. However, Myka was exceptionally intelligent. She knew that although Rody's explanation was simple, the situation itself must have been extremely thrilling. She could not help but exclaim again and again.

When Rody talked until the part where Diane beat up the soldiers in the West Hill, Myka could not help but whisper, "She is always so impatient. Darke and I could not stop her."

As soon as Myka finished her sentence, Diane's voice came through from the door. "Hmph... I helped you find the person you think of day and night but then you talk bad about me behind my back."

Chapter 200: Confession

When they saw Diane standing at the door, Rody and Myka quickly broke off their embrace. However, the red-faced Myka still bravely leaned on Rody.

Diane showed a strange expression as she walked in and laughed. "What's wrong? Did I come at a bad time?" These words were embarrassing for the two but luckily Diane did not pursue the matter. She blushed as she looked at Rody and Myka. When she saw Myka's red face, the passion in her eyes, and her messy hair, she could easily guess what the two of them had been doing.

Diane cleared her throat and then said, "I... Uh... I actually did not want to disturb you. However, Darke has already seen Rody. I and Myka knew Rody's identity but I do not know how to explain this to Darke. So, I came back here. The two of you, please stop scolding me in your hearts."

Rody frowned and thought to himself. He then replied, "Darke should be told about this matter. In the future, there are many things that I will need his help with. This matter involves many people but I do not have many helpers by my side. I trust Darke but I still need to find a suitable time to tell him."

Diane nodded and then loudly said, "Alright. I have asked what I wanted to ask! The two of you... Please carry on! I... I am going!"

Diane had a red face as she turned to leave. At that moment, Myka suddenly stood up. She walked to Diane's side and pulled her hand. She laughed and said, "Stop running! Such naughty words ... carry on what ... "

Rody looked awkward. He then stood up and said, "I need to return to the barracks. I cannot stay here too long. The two of you should just stay here in West Hill. This place also looks secluded."

Diane stared at Rody and loudly asked, "Are you going to let

Myka just stay here? You are not taking her back with you?"

Rody was silent for a while. He looked at Myka guiltily before saying, "I can't right now... I cannot reveal my identity right now and women are forbidden in the barracks..."

Diane then asked, "If women are forbidden in the barracks, what about the Duke's other home?"

Rody sighed as he slowly pulled Myka's hands. He whispered, "I... I do not know how to say this to you. Right now, my identity is a little peculiar. According to our plans, we would slowly reveal my relationship with Nicole. So, for the next few days, I cannot accompany you... This involved too many people... The burden would be too heavy..."

Myka smiled calmly and gently said, "I understand. You do not need to say anymore. I will wait for you here."

Myka's words made Rody feel even more guilty. He then said, "I have no choice. My current identity involves too many people. If the plan fails, the consequences would be serious. Myka. Can you understand that?"

Myka shook her head and softly said, "It does not matter. I will believe whatever you say."

Rody looked at Myka and softly said, "I have truly caused you a lot of heartaches."

Diane coughed lightly when he saw the two lovers stare at each other and gave a wry smile. "The two of you really think I am transparent. Alright... I am going now. Even if you do not scold me, I will still feel out of place."

Rody shook his head. He then laughed and said, "I have to go back now. Be careful in West Hill. If you have any problems, look for me at the barracks." He then looked at Myka and said, "Wait here for me. I will come back for you."

Diane watched Rody leave. She then turned to Myka and

hatefully said, "Are you really just letting him go like this? You have followed him for thousands of miles. You finally found him today but then you are just letting him leave like this?"

Myka smiled and replied, "What else could I do? Do you want him to take me back immediately? Do you want him to marry me immediately?" Myka then shook her head and continued, "He is also quite busy. How could I disturb him? I already knew about his feelings for Nicole since the time I realized I liked him. His relationship with Nicole ... I already stopped caring since the first day I started following him. If he said that he would come and look for me, he would definitely do it. As for you..." Myke gave Diane a strange smile. She pulled Diane's hand and whispered in her ear. "Do you think I do not know what you are thinking of?"

Rody did not return to the barracks. He went straight to the Duke's mansion. That night, the local officials greeted the Duke's group with a banquet.

The Duke had announced that he would not be able to attend and Nicole would represent the Duke during the banquet. Rody would also appear publicly.

Although Rody did not like this kind of activities among the nobles, he had to be patient in order to gradually reveal his relationship with Nicole.

When he entered Nicole's room, he saw Nicole lost in thought as she looked at the ceremonial clothes on the bed. When she saw Rody walk in, she came forward. She smiled and said, "Why are you so late? I am choosing the clothes for you to wear."

Rody gave a wry smile. He was thinking about how to explain to Nicole about Myka. Nicole pulled Rody to the bed and whispered, "Tonight, we will appear publicly. Ah. You will definitely gain a lot of attention. Basically, do not make any mistakes. Do not let people see your connection with the Duke..."

Rody laughed bitterly and said, "This is somewhat strange. Even

when I am myself, I am worried about people recognizing me as someone else... aaii..."

Nicole laughed and said, "I know you do not like it but... You just have to be patient even if it is just for me. After tonight, you can pursue me as Rody. After that, we can be together and then..."

Rody nodded and gently hugged Nicole. "Let us go step by step... Today, I..." Rody then made a strange face as he thought to himself. After that, he became determined and said, "Nicole. I have something to say to you."

Nicole finally noticed that Rody's expression was different from the usual. She sat down slowly and asked, "What's wrong?"

Rody took a deep breath. Looking at Nicole's concerned face, he felt guilty. He then thought about Myka's deep love and he gritted his teeth. He took a deep breath and said, "Do you remember the time I had just started masquerading as your brother... the day you sent me back to the Imperial Academy?"

Nicole laughed and said, "Of course! I remember that you were very reluctant and I had to force you to go... Do you remember ... At that time, I was still your master!"

Rody also laughed. He remembered that he was a simple warrior who was severely punished by Nicole and felt nostalgic. He pulled Nicole up and had her sit in his arms. He then sighed and continued, "That day in the academy, I met with Bayan and then..."

Rody then told the story of how he met Bayan, how Bayan brought him to a brothel and how he met Myka.

Nicole's face changed slowly as she whispered, "Was it the day you fought against the guard that belonged to Prince Sultan, the Great Moon Kingdom's envoy?"

Rody nodded. Although he felt embarrassed, he still told everything about himself with Myka.

Nicole's face gradually turned pale and her body trembled. She bit her lips quietly as she listened to Rody's story.

When Rody finished, Nicole trembled and asked, "Then, why are you telling me this?"

Rody saw that Nicole was gently trembling and quickly held her. He then whispered, "Nicole. I know I am originally just a commoner warrior. You were the one who brought me onto this magnificent stage and also my first love. No matter what, my feelings for you would not change. But... I also cannot abandon Myka. Right now I..." Rody gave a bitter laugh and said, "I feel like a scoundrel."

Nicole was silent for a moment. She sighed and slowly whispered, "You are not a scoundrel." She then looked at Rody with a complicated gaze and whispered, "Can you let me think about this for a while?"

Rody became scared and tightly hugged Nicole. "What are you thinking of? Do you want to leave me? That is impossible!"

Nicole looked as if she had tears in her eyes as she shook her head. She laughed with a bit of agony as she said, "Leave you? How am I supposed to leave you? Do I even have a choice? Can you just let me think for a while? Rody. Right now, I do not know anything and don't ask me anything. Just let me think for a while."

Rody gritted his teeth and said, "No. I won't leave. I will stay here and watch you."

Nicole laughed and replied, "Watch me? Are you afraid that I would run away? Are you afraid that I would disappear?"

Rody nodded and whispered, "Yes! The way you look right now... I am afraid that you would just disappear!"

Nicole shook her head and softly said, "I will not run away... Just... Just don't force me to say anything right now. Just let me think about it for a moment." Her face was sad, and she sighed

sadly and said, "In fact, I should have known. Your identity now is different. Naturally, there would be a lot of women by your side." Nicole then stretched out her hands to touch Rody's face. She then covered Rody's mouth with her hand to stop him from explaining. She then pulled out a silver chain from Rody's chest. On the chain was a black iron ring.

Nicole held the ring in her hand. She then smiled and said, "I always see this hanging on your chest. I believe there should also be an 'interesting' story about it too..."

Rody sighed. That ring was originally a gift from Muse, the Black Veil Saint. He was at a loss and could not help but hold Nicole's hand. He then whispered, "You knew it earlier?"

Nicole nodded but then she immediately shook her head and smiled, "It crossed my mind... Did you know? Women are usually very sensitive. I have long realized that this was always hanging around your neck. I also know that you are becoming more powerful and becoming more respected. The women at your side would definitely not just be me alone... I grew up in the circle of nobles and have already seen this kind of thing many times."

Rody was disconcerted. He quickly and loudly replied, "No! This is not what you think... I..."

Nicole laughed bitterly and looked at Rody with tender eyes. She softly said, "I understand. You do not have to say anything. I really understand. I know you. I also know that you are different from that person... But..." Her eyes turned red as she continued, "In the end, I am a woman. I am not able to dismiss it."

Rody then held Nicole's hand with one hand and hugged her with the other. He then told her about how he got the ring. Once again, Nicole remained silent as she listened to Rody.

However, this time Nicole showed a worried expression. She did not blame Rody but she still whispered, "This is problematic. After all, Muse is from the Roland Continent. Do you intend to look for

her in the Roland Continent?"

Rody shook his head and whispered, "I do not know... However, I know that I will go and find her. My relationship with her, with you and with Myka are all different. She did not say anything to me. Neither did I say anything to her. However, I will definitely go to the Roland Continent once. No matter what, I will definitely go and see her once."

Nicole sighed softly and murmured, "You. I really do not know what to say to you... Rody. There are times when your heart is hard. However, sometimes it is too soft."

They no longer said anything. Rody continued to hold Nicole in fear that she might fly away. On the other hand, Nicole slowly closed her eyes. Her face was calm as if she was already asleep but sparkling tears flowed from the corner of her eyes.

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